

Characteristics of the Civilian Labour Force, 1946-65.—The civilian non-institutional population averaged 13,128,000 in 1965 compared with 8,779,000 in 1946, an increase of 49.5 p.c., and during the same period the labour force increased 47.9 p.c. to 7,141,000. As a result, the proportion of the population 14 years of age or over in the labour force declined somewhat from 55.0 p.c. to 54.4 p.c. during the period. Underlying this slight decline was a decrease in the proportion of males in the labour force and a partially offsetting increase in the proportion of females in the labour force. Such factors as changes in the age composition of the population, an increase in the number of young people deferring their entry into the labour force by remaining longer in school and a greater tendency for workers to retire from the labour force at an earlier age contributed to the decline in the male labour force participation rate from 85.1 p.c. to 77.9 p.c. between 1946 and 1965. Although these factors also influenced females, they were more than compensated by the increase in the proportion of married women in the labour force. For example, between 1959 and 1964 the labour force participation rate of married females increased from 18.0 p.c. to 24.2 p.c. In 1965 married women constituted 51.7 p.c. of the female labour force and the proportion of the female population in the labour force increased from 23.4 p.c. in 1953 to 31.3 p.c. in 1965. The tendency for a greater proportion of married women to enter the labour force was also reflected in the labour force participation rates of females 25-44 and 45-64 years of age. During the 1953-65 period, the proportion of 25-44-year-old females in the labour force rose from 23.1 p.c. to 32.6 p.c. and for the 45-64-year-olds the proportion increased from 17.2 p.c. to 32.9 p.c.

Greater job opportunities for women, particularly in the service industries, facilitated the increase in the female labour force participation rate. In 1946, the goods-producing industries and the service-producing industries accounted for about 60 p.c. and 40 p.c., respectively, of total employment; by 1965 these proportions had changed to 43 p.c. and 57 p.c., respectively. Some notable shifts in the distribution of employment also took place within these broad industry groupings. In 1946, almost one in four employed persons worked in agriculture but by 1965 the ratio had declined to less than one in ten. Between 1946 and 1965, a slight decline occurred in the proportion of persons employed in manufacturing industries but the proportion employed in trade, in finance, insurance and real estate, and in service industries increased substantially.

Paralleling the shifts in the distribution of employment among industries was a change in the occupational mix. A greater increase occurred in the number of white-collar occupations than in the number of blue-collar jobs in the postwar period, reflecting the changing composition of final output and also the introduction of new methods of production. Table 5 shows that increases occurred in the proportions of persons employed in the managerial, the professional and technical, the clerical and the service occupational groups in the 1948-65 period. On the other hand, agricultural occupations, in which approximately 22.5 p.c. of all employed persons worked in 1948, accounted for only 8.7 p.c. of employed persons in 1965. Small declines also occurred in the proportions of employed persons working in the fishing, logging, trapping and mining occupational group, in the manufacturing and mechanical group and in the transportation group.

During the 1946-65 period, total employment increased 47.1 p.c. to 6,862,000; the number of men employed rose 34.2 p.c. to 4,842,000 and the number of females 91.1 p.c. to 2,020,000. On an annual average basis, unemployment as a percentage of the labour force fluctuated widely during the period, ranging between 2.2 p.c. in 1947 and 7.1 p.c. in 1961; it averaged 3.9 p.c. in 1965. Throughout this period, unemployment rates were substantially lower for women than for men.

Persons not in the labour force averaged 5,986,000 in 1965 compared with 3,950,000 in 1946, an increase of 51.5 p.c. Housewives and students together accounted for over 80 p.c. of the 1965 total.