

LABOUR STATISTICS

J.B. Metlzer, Chairman

THE CHAIRMAN: We are due to start a discussion on Labour Statistics. I think that all of us can add something to the question of statistics. Mr. G.V. Haythorne from the Dominion Government is the leader of our discussion.

If statistics are to be of any value to us they must be living and must be vital. I do not like statistics that are historical because I do not believe they really help us. It may be a guide to refer to what has transpired in the past but actually what we want today is to be able to rely upon immediate statistics as a sure guide for our future conduct.

I am going to call on Mr. Haythorne who will introduce the subject and then there will be a general discussion.

MR. HAYTHORNE: With your permission I would like to introduce the other people from the Federal Government who are here and who are particularly interested in statistics. We do not want to monopolize this discussion, but I think you would like to know who is here.

Mr. Nathan Keyfitz is from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Among other things he is the Chief Mathematical Adviser to the Dominion Statistician. Mr. Harold Greenway is the Director, Labour and Prices Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and Mr. Neil McKellar of the Bureau handles unemployment statistics.

Mr. James Forbes is with the Economics and Research Branch, of the Department of Labour and Mr. J.B. Lane, also from the Economics and Research Branch is looking after our Working Conditions and Social Analysis Section.

In opening this discussion I should perhaps refer to the resolution adopted at the last conference. It was alluded to this morning. Briefly, it is to the effect that the Association would like to have investigated

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and explored the whole question of collecting labour statistics by federal and provincial agencies. I think there was a suggestion that it would be well, perhaps, to look into the past co-ordination between federal and provincial agencies. In trying to outline quickly for you the field of labour statistics in Canada, as we know it today, I thought we might note three or four items. Perhaps we can do this by asking (1) What is now being done? What statistics are being collected in this field and who collects them? (2) Why are these statistics being collected? (3) What steps are being taken, or might be taken, to remove any over lapping or unnecessary forms of collection?

In what is being done I think we could classify the statistics being assembled by federal agencies under three or four headings. I am not going to attempt to cover all of these in any detail. I would rather try to give you a sort of perspective of what is being done federally, and then we might attempt to see what is being done provincially.

There are five main areas: (1) population; (2) labour income; (3) working conditions; (4) collective bargaining, and (5) hours of work.

In population, of course, the main source of statistical information is through the census taken every ten years, but in addition to the census information there is the information collected in the field of vital statistics.

There is a quarterly Labour Force Survey. It was introduced not so long ago by the Bureau of Statistics and has provided very valuable information as to the numbers at work or seeking work.

Employment statistics are collected by two main agencies -- the National Employment Service and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

There are two or three main sources of figures on unemployment. First of all, there is the quarterly Labour Force Survey which assembles information on the hours of work of a sample group of people during the week

of the survey and which reveals valuable data on the incidence of unemployment among the labour force; secondly, the local Employment Offices through their usual data on the number of applications for placements. The third source is from quarterly reports from trade unions.

Immigration statistics are assembled mainly through the Department of Immigration. These affect the general field of population.

There are statistics of wage rates by occupation. These are used, among other things, in establishing fair wages for Dominion Government contracts. There are also statistics on hourly earnings and weekly earnings assembled by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

Under working conditions, we have an annual survey of hours of work conducted in conjunction with our wage rate survey each Fall, from which we get information on standard hours, vacations with pay, statutory holidays and similar subjects.

Information on industrial accidents is assembled almost entirely through the Workmens' Compensation Boards.

As to collective bargaining we receive statistics mainly through the provincial Departments of Labour.

Trade union membership statistics are obtained directly from unions.

We assemble collective agreement information through our annual survey of wages and working conditions and through the co-operation, in several instances, of the provincial governments.

That covers, briefly, present Federal sources of information.

The provincial sources may be considered under the same headings. We do not have complete information on all the provinces but we do know that in some provinces, particularly in British Columbia, information on employment is assembled monthly. Several provinces assemble information

on employment which is obtained through the administration of their Minimum Wage legislation.

On labour income, weekly wages, information is assembled in British Columbia in several industrial groups. Some provinces have assembled wage rate information, for example, Manitoba and several others.

On working conditions, a number of the provinces secure information on hours of work; some on overtime.

I have already mentioned the information assembled on accidents. Some accident information for certain industries goes directly to the Bureau of Statistics.

As to collective bargaining, some provinces assemble information on strikes and lock-outs; other provinces depend upon information that is assembled federally in this field.

Incidentally, with regard to agreements, one of the most complete sources of information is in the Province of Quebec where a very extensive record is kept of all the agreements that are signed. The lists of these agreements which we have been getting from them during the last few years, have been very helpful.

Now to turn to the reasons why we want these statistics, I would suggest that there are two or three fairly obvious reasons. Every now and again we have to decide whether these reasons continue to exist.

I agree entirely with the Chairman's remark that we want to make our efforts in this field valuable, practical and up-to-date. We do not want our figures, as Mr. Metzler said earlier, to be museum pieces. Obviously, several government agencies, whether provincial or federal, require a certain amount of information, statistical or otherwise, to carry on their regular work. In the Federal Government, for instance, the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the National Employment Service must know how many people are looking for work, how many are unplaced and what vacancies there are. We need to know how the employment situation is changing from week to week and from month to month. Industrial Relations Branches, both

federal and provincial, require information with respect to strikes and lock-outs. Obviously, they need to know what things are happening which may lead to work stoppages. It seems to me that they need to know of incidents as a result or which it may be alleged that conditions of employment are unfair. We cannot gauge these incidents unless we have information. Information in this field is not always reliable, and perhaps, in some instances, this has resulted from our not having been able to work out the degree of refinement that is required to give full reliability to the data. In any case we have not developed sufficient uniformity to know exactly whether the statistics can be completely reliable or whether they have to be taken with a few grains of salt, and whether they still have to be improved in order to be completely accurate.

A second obvious group of needs are those of employers and employees throughout Canada. It has been interesting for us in the federal side to observe increased attention by both management and labour not only to the collective bargaining field but also to employment. Their interest in labour force, turn-over, and absenteeism is proof of this. I was going to say thousands but I would say millions of dollars are being spent in Canada by some of our large organizations in analysis and research for which statistics of one form or another are required. I do not wish to emphasize this too much, but I think that the necessity of having accurate information in making analyses and studies of policy matters in the labour field whether it is on the provincial side or the federal side does deserve consideration.

We need to make, it seems to me, more careful analysis of many of our labour problems in Canada before we can be completely satisfied that we have the best solutions. We do not necessarily always have to assemble new information, or make new and special surveys. It is sometimes rather a question of making sure that the information we have is being well used and analyzed and that there is no overlapping in our efforts.

The final need that should be mentioned arises from the growing interest in obtaining accurate data on labour matters by the International Labour Office and

other international organizations. We have been interested in observing during the last two or three years the considerable increase in the number of questionnaires we are getting from the I.L.O.

What steps have been taken to co-ordinate this work? On the federal side I should refer again briefly to the Interdepartmental Committee I mentioned this morning which was set up as an advisory committee to review and analyze our existing sources of information and statistics and to determine what steps could be taken by the three main federal agencies to co-ordinate this work. These agencies are the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The National Employment Service and the Department of Labour's Economics and Research Branch. I think it is fair to say that through this committee we have made a start at the job of analysing our common problems. Sometimes in the past there has been too much of a tendency for one agency to make its plans in the labour field without giving as much consideration as it might to the interests and needs of other agencies.

One of the problems with which the Committee has been dealing relates to the adoption of a new standard industrial classification. For many years agencies have pretty much built up their own industrial classification. Nearly all of the main agencies have different industrial classifications. We discussed this last year. We found that at present almost every Workmen's Compensation Board, is using a different method of classification.

We are making an effort to have the standard industrial classification which was developed in the last five or six years generally accepted. Then, when we talk about an industry, we will all be talking about the same one.

I am glad to say, that some of the Workmen's Compensation Boards have been making changes in their statistical methods. For instance, Ontario has adopted the standard industrial classification.

Another problem on which the Committee has been working is the elimination of overlapping in forms that go out to employers from Federal Government agencies.

Another subject of discussion has been that of occupational definitions for use by employers in reporting wage rates.

The fourth field is industrial accidents.

The fifth is a definition of units of measurements in the unemployment field. We feel that if we can get uniformity as to the measurements we use it will help in assembling some of the information in that field.

With respect to federal and provincial co-operation in the statistical field not as much has been accomplished during the last year as in the other area. We feel, from the federal point of view, that we are working on our own problems and trying to eliminate duplication and achieve uniformity before we go too far in our discussions with the provinces. We have had a number of discussions, however.

I think that the greatest progress has been in the field of accident statistics. We have had helpful discussions with all of the Workmen's Compensation Boards. Some of them have given a good deal of attention to changing their current methods and assisting in bringing their information more in line with that of other provinces. A study is being made now by some of the Board of a suggested standard classification of accidents by causes and by nature of the injury. We felt that before we could push too far into this field we would have to have something sound for all concerned.

Another area of co-operation has been in the collecting of information on collective bargaining. All provinces were requested during the year to send to our Industrial Relations Branch copies of the Reports of their Boards of Conciliation. These Reports help us to keep in touch with what is happening in this field and give some very useful information on trends.

We also have been obtaining from several of the provinces lists of agreements that have been made between unions and management.

We suggested during the year that we might be able to work out an arrangement with the provincial Departments of Labour so that some of their inspectors would follow up some of the survey work that was being done. No specific action has been taken here, but we have been exploring the matter further.

Finally, with regard to co-operation with industry, I want to say that we know and I am sure you do too, that several industrial organizations have been making surveys in the labour field. They realize, as we all do, that this represents overlapping and duplication. One large firm conducted a wage rate survey in Ontario and Quebec. That firm would like very much to see that survey integrated by the Civil Service on a national basis, and I am sure they would be glad to see that done as soon as we are able to solve our problem of getting reports together and getting our results out quickly. We feel encouraged in this respect by the fact that some groups, such as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Textile Institute, are prepared to drop some of their surveys and get behind the government surveys in this field. If we can make sure that our respective needs are being met at the one time, these groups have said that they are quite prepared to urge all of their members to get their reports back quickly and to press them, if necessary, to see that that is accomplished.

Before closing I would like to say that we welcome this opportunity of discussing with you the question of co-operation and co-ordination in the collection and preparation of labour statistics. It is a timely subject and we shall be glad to have any suggestions which anyone may care to make for improving our methods in this field.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you will all agree that Mr. Haythorne has covered the question of statistics on a very broad basis. It will be helpful to us all because I do not doubt that all of us, at one time or another, like to be reassured on some of the work we are doing. I have always felt that the Dominion Government was best suited to carry on this type of work. They have the experts to give us the benefit of their work. I

think that as time goes on we will all make more and more use of the results of their operations.

I am going to throw the meeting open for general discussion, and hope that you all will take part. I would invite any of the other Dominion Government delegates not to be out-done by Mr. Haythorne. Their observations will be helpful.

MR. ANDERSON: There is a definite lack of information in Nova Scotia with respect to wage rates and hours of labour, and we were wondering if some co-operative arrangement could be made with the Dominion Government so that this information would be available to us in the form of extra copies of the questionnaires that were sent in, with the understanding, of course, that a confidential arrangement would be observed. We feel that there is a definite need for information of this type but have felt reluctant to send out another questionnaire to the employers. If some arrangement could be worked out with the Dominion, we would be willing to assume the cost of clerical help. I understand that there was a co-operative scheme launched in Manitoba a couple of years ago, about which Mr. Wilson or Mr. Haythorne might be able to give me some information.

MR. HAYTHORNE: Mr. Anderson, the project mentioned in Manitoba was undertaken largely through Mr. Wilson's co-operation with the Provincial Civil Service. It did lead to some very helpful discussion of how in future this same type of survey might be extended to cover a wider field. The question that came up there, and it is coming up in a number of places, is what occupations do we want to cover and how do we define them. Sometimes we find that for provincial purposes there is need for greater detail with regard to occupations and particularly with regard to a locality that we may have at the moment. The question which arises here is: Should the federal survey be expanded to cover more area or should we dovetail the two together?

To answer your first question I do not think it would be too difficult for us to insert in our annual wage-rate survey an extra copy of the form received from employers and make it available to the provinces, or alternatively, where there are special compilations of statistical data which would apply to various provinces, for instance,

occupational or industrial breakdowns, we will make these and then give you the results of the tabulations.

MR. PARSONS: With reference to Mr. Anderson's question and Mr. Haythorne's reply, we have a new Industrial Statistics Act and are trying to collect some of the information the Federal Government collects from the same employers. We are interested in co-operating with the Federal Government, and there are one or two points that you might consider would be helpful to us.

One point is this. We want information for certain purposes under our Statistics Act. Perhaps in the other provinces the statistics for the guidance of the Minimum Wage Board are collected under the Minimum Wage Act. In our province all our statistics are collected under the Industrial Statistics Act. We want to know what some employers are paying in some particular area. We send out forms to individual employers in a certain industry. We do not want to question the same employers as the Federal Government if we can find out what forms they are sending and the rates of pay for a certain industry. I do not think we can get at the present time more specific rates of pay than your Department is gathering.

MR. HAYTHORNE: At the moment, Mr. Parsons, we would not have any difficulty in giving you information on individual rates for individual employers provided our surveys were done on a joint basis, for instance, if the employer knew we were getting information for both your Department and ours. There is the confidential aspect which we always insist upon and as a result of which we do not give out individual information on individual employers. The other point is that we would certainly welcome, and I think the Dominion Bureau of Statistics would also, the opportunity of clearing with you as to each employer from whom you were getting information so that there would be no overlapping in the questions being asked.

MR. PARSONS: I do not know whether the Dominion Bureau of Statistics could supply the province with the names of the employers that we are asking for.

MR. HAYTHORNE: I think the same question would be likely to apply. In the past we have not obtained information with the understanding that it was to be available to both agencies. The only question is, would the employer have any objection? I think that most of them would have no objection; very few, anyway.

MR. PARSONS: We want to give all the information we can and we have given information to the Federal Department. I wondered whether mention of this point might help to work out a better system for all provinces.

MR. WILSON: We have been very fortunate in the last few years in the extent to which we have been able to discuss our problems with Mr. Haythorne and to work out some of the very same problems which face Mr. Parsons and Mr. Anderson. I know that Quebec and Ontario have developed a good system of collecting statistics but Manitoba's figures were predominantly on an agricultural basis. Lately there have been problems arising where statistics on labour matters would be of extra importance to us provided they were vital, current and complete. We have had the situation somewhat complicated by the fact that we have been asked by the Provincial Civil Service to secure for them data on going rates. When we go to the employers we like to be able to tell them that this is important to them. We also like to be able to tell them something in return. What we have been aiming at, in general, is the co-ordination of all the demands for the furnishing of data which are important to either provincial or Dominion agencies or to other employers. In Winnipeg at the present time 30 or 40 of the older employers make a practice, when they have a problem of employment, of calling on a number of other employers for information, and these employers would be delighted to be clear of that if they had up-to-date information.

The material that we have been obtaining for the Civil Service has not been by way of sampling. We have gone to great lengths to obtain information and have prepared scatter sheets and, without doing any analysis of the material, we have distributed it to the employers as well as to the Civil Service.

We do feel that we can confidently look forward to the time when we will work in close co-operation with the Dominion agencies, with the other provinces and with any other data-collecting agency so that we may get up-to-date information, particularly when the Dominion has been able to give us a lead in establishing standard definitions both as to industry and occupation, and we will know we are talking about the same kind of animal when we use a particular phrase. I remember in the War Labour Board days we had an application for a salary increase from a firm which had a confidential secretary-office manageress. The increase was from \$12.50 a week, which was the minimum wage, to \$13.50 a week. We found that she was the only employee in a very new manufacturers' agency where one little girl fresh from business college had been told that it was very difficult to get a wage increase from the Labour Board. I am almost certain that the increase was granted.

We are anxious to get all the information and all the help we can and will gladly offer any assistance we can to the Dominion agencies in establishing standards. Until we have done this we cannot get very far in the way of statistics. We confidently look forward to the day when we will be the collecting agency for these statistics and take what we need and pass them on to the Dominion agency. We will be able to get returns 100% faster. There are employers who have no secretaries but have lots of stenographers. There are other firms which will even offer these forms to the stenographic staff, and they will all be secretaries according to that firm's definitions. We will be able to go to an establishment and pin-point to make sure that the same people are called by the same occupational definitions, and that there is uniformity as between one firm and another. We will have collected information useful to everyone and will be glad to take part in all co-operative enterprises aimed at that objective.

MR. PUGH: For a number of years in Alberta we have worked with Dominion statisticians on the matter of obtaining returns.

There are only one or two points that I would like to have some discussion on. The general return a number of years ago was filed either from our Bureau of Statistics or from the Dominion Statistician with the advice that one

copy of the return would go to the Provincial Statistician and one copy to the Dominion Statistician. About three years ago confusion arose when the returns had a rubber stamp on them which said to the employer, "Would you kindly send in this return giving the Dominion Statistician authority to forward a copy to the Provincial Statistician?" Automatically our returns would not reach our statistician and, as our Chairman said a moment ago, to have valuable statistics they must be alive and current. The Provincial Statistician said that we would have to wait a year until it came from Ottawa. I discussed this problem with Mr. Herbert Marshall a year ago and a good deal of our difficulty has been removed. In the meantime, to get immediate labour returns we have attached to our inspector's report a very simple statistical form for information and, as we have 21 inspectors in Alberta, we have up-to-date information. I am wire today and get a wire back tomorrow as to the range of salaries in Alberta.

I am wondering if we are all aware that the authority to collect statistics rests with the Dominion Government and, while we do benefit a great deal from their assistance, would there be some way by which we could encourage employers to file returns immediately with the provinces and with the Dominion?

We are perfectly satisfied in the case of the coal mining industry and the lumbering industry because we collect statistical returns under another authority and they must file a return.

I was wondering if there was some way that we could have immediate returns or a breakdown of the figures. I realize that it would be additional work but if we have to wait for a year, or a year and a half, their value is lost to a certain degree.

There is one other point I would like to mention. Mr. Haythorne, is there any way by which we could obtain more complete information as to the number of unemployed? At the present time the statistics collected relate to those who are registered, I believe, through the Unemployment Insurance Commission, but as there are certain classifications which do not register, the figure for unemployment may possibly be wrong. As we issue our permits to employers for overtime work in the light of the available

manpower, we think it is important to have correct information as to the number of unemployed persons. We allow emergency overtime without permits but if it is not an emergency a permit must be obtained.

MR. HAYTHORNE: I wonder if Mr. Keyfitz or one of the men from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics would like to make some comments on some of these questions.

MR. KEYFITZ: We are very concerned with this problem of unemployment. We have worked on it for the last four or five years, and we now have a labour force survey that operates every quarter. It simply goes to households in the country and asks of everyone in these houses what they are working at, what hours they have worked and what their occupation is, and the estimates are produced. We have had a schedule for turning them out which required about seven weeks. We are now trying to bring it down to four or five weeks. I think we will succeed because we have a new method of doing it. An advantage of our sample survey is that you get down to small size and we have chosen the size that would give very good estimates for the Dominion but we have not been able to publish results covering the smaller provinces. We are moving in that direction, however.

The definition of unemployment that we use applies to everyone whether he has had a wage-earning job or not; people who are just out of school and never had a job at all and older people. Everyone is asked, "Did you work last week, or were you mostly looking for work?" "If you worked, how many hours did you work? If you worked only a few hours, were you also looking for work so that you could get a full-time job?" So, we really find the whole story with respect to everyone who is subjected to the sample survey. When you get down to smaller units the sample error becomes more serious. The Bureau of Statistics does just what the Employment Service does not do. The latter describes the situation with respect to smaller areas but only covers the people who come to the National Employment Service. They certainly have their place for getting very short term changes in the situation and for getting the local variations.

I am mainly interested in what the provincial people have to say in regard to our statistics but while I am here I would like to say something about our census. Up until now you would only get results from a census five years later, and the ordinary employer could not make use of it. I think this time it will be different. We have a very tight time schedule. This is being made possible by more mechanization than we have had before. In the past, we did a lot of the jobs by hand. It took two or three years to get results. This time we have a document on which the enumerator will make marks. A machine will be located in that particular part of the country and the punched cards will be put through the machines. We think we will have our statistics out within eight or nine months. This will give labour force information on the smallest area in the country. There will be punch marks for all sorts of definitions.

There is one more point I might mention. The Dominion Statistician asked me to say first that he is sorry he could not be here, and secondly, that he would be very pleased to have a Dominion-Provincial conference on this subject. He is authorized to call such a conference. The important thing is to be sure, of course, before we go to the length of calling such a conference that it is going to accomplish something. We hope that some time within the next few months active work towards that end might be undertaken. This is one of the things I would like your reaction on.

MR. MURCHISON: I would like to ask how Alberta goes about collecting the type of information as to wage scales. Do your inspectors collect that?

MR. PUGH: Oh, yes, we try to cover every employer in the Province once a year. Some employers we might cover twice a year. We made 38,000 visits last year. The inspections covered plants with anything over 20 men.

MR. MURCHISON: The other point I had in mind was the one Mr. Wilson brought up, the matter of co-ordination whereby returns would come in, as I understood it, promptly. I have in mind the type of work done in Saskatchewan. One survey was sent to trade unions asking them for their current membership. During July of 1948 we covered the

province. During July of 1949 we covered the province again and found the fantastic figure of 2,000 more in 1949 than there were in 1948, which was not right. There cannot be that many. The truth of the matter was that the harvest was on earlier and so workmen became trade union members. Both provincially and federally, the employer has too many forms to fill out. I am a little afraid that once a year is not going to give the picture we require. In an agricultural province such as ours we will have some Alberta oil through before long, but in the meantime it is mostly wheat.

MR. HAYTHORNE: On that, Mr. Murchison, sometimes the time of your survey makes a difference.

MR. MURCHISON: We chose July because that was not the wheat harvest in Saskatchewan.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion?

Before we close this particular phase of activity, I would like to refer to the report that the Department of Labour of Ontario has made to this Conference because I think it may have something to do with what Mr. Parsons was discussing, namely information on minimum wage rates.

MR. PARSONS: On the existing rate of wages.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to read about two paragraphs. This is on minimum wages.

High employment and the continuing buoyancey of earnings has in some degree overshadowed the beneficial effect of The Minimum Wage Act. It has not meant, however, that the Orders made under the Act in respect of female employees could be shelved. There has been a development which will be of interest to the members of the C.A.A.L.L. Realizing the need for relieving employers from too many inspections by government officers, and yet desiring to have an adequate check on employers of female help in Ontario, an arrangement has been made whereby the auditors of the Unemployment Insurance Commission are checking minimum wages for the Ontario Department of Labour as they make their audits for the Dominion. This

new method has meant that there has been a better coverage of industry and at the same time the greater proportion of employers in the Province have been relieved from making routine annual returns.

Mr. Farmer, Director of the Minimum Wage Branch, is here, and if I make a mistake in the number of forms that we used to send out, he will correct me, but it is about 40,000 a year.

MR. FARMER: Yes, it would total that if they were all added together.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What we do is to supply the Unemployment Insurance Commission's auditors with copies of the Orders made under the Minimum Wage Act which they carry with them. As they go from employer to employer they check to see that their Act has been complied with and at the same time examine the record of the wages paid to ensure that our Minimum Wage Orders have been complied with.

New employers are now more promptly contacted. As soon as they apply to the Unemployment Insurance Commission for a licence to buy unemployment insurance stamps their names and addresses are forwarded to this Department. In the past year, 11,000 new employers were reported to the Department and to most of them copies of the Minimum Wage Orders were sent.

We have got around that particular problem. Our interest is in knowing whether or not the rates have been paid, not in obtaining a statistical return of the Dominion Government through the Unemployment Insurance Commission auditors, who have done a grand job during the past year.

If there is no further discussion, I now declare this subject closed, and will call upon Mr. Wilson, the First Vice-President of the Association, to take over.

MR. WILSON: The talks by Mr. Haythorne and the others on labour statistics have been very worthwhile and constructive.

The discussions on industrial safety and on labour statistics have reached a high level, and I know we have all benefited.