

# Saskatchewan

# ECONOMIC REVIEW

## SASKATCHEWAN'S LABOR FORCE

The productivity of Saskatchewan has long been symbolized by a substantial output of agricultural products. More recently it has gained increasing status as a source of considerable mineral wealth, of which the two most spectacular examples are uranium and petroleum. The ability to produce such wealth requires, in the first place, the fortuitous dispensation by nature of the necessary physical attributes—a fertile topsoil, adequate precipitation, ore bodies, and petroliferous rock and sand. A second and equally essential requirement is a body of men and women to inhabit the region and wrest a livelihood from its latent resources with such perseverance, skill, and capital as they can muster.

Over the past half century the people of Saskatchewan have transformed the face of the province; inevitably they themselves have become altered in the process. In this context it is of interest to examine some of the changes that have occurred in that segment of the population described as the labor or working force.

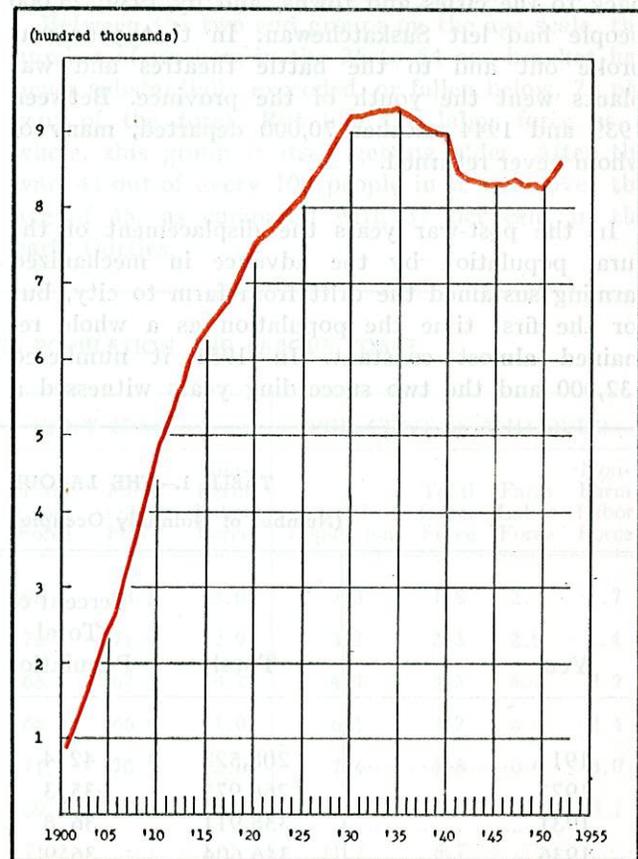
### I. IN THE AGGREGATE

#### Total Population

The influences which contributed most to the opening up and settlement of the prairies have often been cited. A buoyant world market for wheat, the perfection of dry-land farming techniques, the development of early-maturing varieties

THE POPULATION OF SASKATCHEWAN  
1900 to 1953

(Inter-censal Years Estimated)



of wheat, these were among the principal factors that laid the basis for the influx of homesteaders that began after 1900. They were spurred on by the gradual disappearance of arable free land elsewhere, and were paced by the rapid expansion of a network of railways and branch lines. The result was that from 1901 to 1931 the population of Saskatchewan increased more than tenfold. By 1936, a further small increase brought it to its peak of 931,000.

During the ensuing decade the population dropped by more than ten per cent. In those years, not only was the natural increase drained off, but almost 100,000 existing residents departed. Several reasons can be advanced to explain this phenomenon. The slight growth from 1931 to 1936 had occurred, of course, during the depression. Even though the land was stricken with drought, many who were unemployed went back to the farm simply because they preferred the blowing dust of the country fields to the soup kitchens of the cities. Then, beginning in 1937, the worst crop year in the history of the province, the trek began back to the cities and towns, and by 1939, 25,000 people had left Saskatchewan. In that year war broke out and to the battle theatres and war plants went the youth of the province. Between 1939 and 1944 another 70,000 departed, many of whom never returned.

In the post-war years the displacement of the rural population by the advance in mechanized farming sustained the drift from farm to city, but for the first time the population as a whole remained almost constant. In 1951 it numbered 832,000 and the two succeeding years witnessed a

substantial increase, so that today it stands at an estimated 861,000. It is thus apparent that the migration from the farms no longer continues beyond the provincial boundaries. Not only are the province's urban centers absorbing the surplus rural population, but a substantial number of new residents as well. Whether or not the present growth will continue depends on a complex of crop conditions, wheat markets, and the impact of a new dynamic—the increasing exploitation of resources other than wheat fields.

**The Labor Force**

Of the 843,000 consumers of economic goods and services who lived in Saskatchewan in 1952, some 304,000 constituted the labor force. As defined for the census, the term refers to all persons 14 years of age or over who have a job or who are looking for work. This includes wage and salary workers, employees, unpaid family workers and self-employed or own-account workers who operate their own business, farm or profession without the assistance of hired help. It does not include students, homemakers, (who are, of course, productive) or retired and voluntarily idle persons. Saskatchewan labor force figures, furthermore, take no account of the 16,000 Indians who live on lands set aside for them within the province.

The 304,000 residents of Saskatchewan who had jobs or were actively seeking work in 1952 represented 36 per cent of the population. This proportion has remained virtually constant since 1921, which is another way of saying that in the last three decades the changes in the size of the labor force have followed closely the population trend.

**TABLE 1.—THE LABOUR FORCE IN SASKATCHEWAN**  
(Number of Gainfully Occupied Persons 14 Years of Age and Over)

Year	Percent of Total Population		Year	Percent of Total Population	
	Total	Percent of Total Population		Total	Percent of Total Population
1911.....	208,522	42.4	1942.....	314,774	37.1
1921.....	266,975	35.3	1944.....	312,630	37.4
1931.....	338,911	36.8	1946.....	310,486	37.3
1936.....	346,604	36.9	1951.....	302,112	36.3
1941.....	315,846	35.3	1952.....	304,323	36.1

The only notable exception was during the war years when housewives and voluntarily idle persons temporarily joined the labor force, and older workers postponed retirement.

Back in the days of the most rapid settlement, between 1901 and 1911, the labor force accounted for a considerably higher proportion of the population total. The explanation, of course, is that the new frontier attracted predominantly those who were able and ready to work. In 1911, for instance, over 208,000 or 42 out of every 100 residents of Saskatchewan had jobs or were actively seeking work. Although in the course of the next ten years the labor force figure rose by almost sixty thousand, the proportion of working population to total population dropped to the 36 per cent where it still stands today.

**The Changing Age Pattern**

As the average life span increases, the population has tended to grow older and the labor force in turn has come to consist more largely of those in the higher age brackets. On the other hand, the general ageing of the population is not the sole reason for the changes in the age composition of the working force. The most conspicuous shifts have occurred in the relative importance of the youngest and the oldest age groups. Where forty years ago 3 out of every 10 of the gainfully occupied were 24 years old or younger, they now account for only one-fourth of the total—a reduction due in part to the increase in high school and

college enrolment. At the other end of the age scale, the proportion of older workers who are 65 and over has been rising steadily, from less than 2 per cent in 1911 to 5½ per cent in 1946, and is probably even higher now, judging by current figures on the age distribution of the population at large. A large part of this increase can be traced to the trend in agricultural occupations. An industry adapted to the capabilities of both the young and the old, agriculture has consistently claimed a larger share of the workers in the top age bracket than its corresponding share of the total manpower pool.

While thus, on the one hand, the older worker has come to represent a larger segment of the working population, comparison shows that over the years the increase in the proportion of this age group has been greater in the total population than in the working force. This trend is in some measure due to the old age security program and various private retirement plans, and is doubtless also related to the greater employment difficulties encountered by older workers, to the reduction in the number of farm operators, and to the decline in other opportunities for self-employment.

Between the two end groups on the age scale, the number of workers in the 26 to 64 age bracket has never substantially exceeded, or fallen below, 70 per cent of the total. But like the labor force as a whole, this group is itself getting older. After the war, 41 out of every 100 people in it were over the age of 45, as compared with 37 per cent in the early thirties.

**TABLE 2.—THE AGE COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE**

Year	PER CENT 24 AND UNDER*				PER CENT 25-64				PER CENT 65 AND OVER			
	Total Population	Total Labor Force	Farm Labor Force	Non-Farm Labor Force	Total Population	Total Labor Force	Farm Labor Force	Non-Farm Labor Force	Total Population	Total Labor Force	Farm Labor Force	Non-Farm Labor Force
1911.....	38.8	30.1	29.6	31.3	58.9	68.1	68.1	68.0	2.3	1.8	2.3	.7
1921.....	37.5	25.4	25.2	25.7	59.3	72.3	71.9	72.9	3.2	2.3	2.9	1.4
1931.....	42.5	28.2	28.5	27.6	54.1	68.5	67.3	70.2	4.4	3.3	4.2	2.2
1936.....	31.0	27.9	28.6	26.6	62.9	68.4	66.9	71.0	6.1	3.7	4.5	2.4
1941.....	28.9	24.1	23.5	25.0	63.8	71.1	70.5	72.0	7.4	4.8	6.0	3.0
1946.....	26.4	24.8	22.8	27.0	65.4	69.7	70.1	69.3	9.2	5.5	7.1	3.7
1951.....	22.8	23.1	.....	.....	65.6	71.2	.....	.....	11.7	5.7	.....	.....

\*For 1911, 1921 and 1931, the percentage between 10 and 24 years; from 1936 on, the percentage between 15 and 24 years.

## II. COMPOSITION OF THE LABOR FORCE

Aggregates are useful, but they have their limitations. As defined, the labor force includes not only industrial wage-earners but farmers, other self-employed persons, employers and persons working without pay. It also includes the employable unemployed. The movement of this composite group is therefore a resultant of the trends within its component parts, and these are now examined in greater detail.

### Fewer Farm Workers

Of particular interest in Saskatchewan is the division of the labor force between those engaged in agricultural, and those engaged in all other pursuits. In good crop years, and the recent ones have been exceptionally good, four-fifths or more of all production is agricultural, and rarely is it less than

province that farmers and farm workers accounted for less than half of the working force. Only ten years before, the ratio had stood at six to four and, to go further back, in the early twenties more than two-thirds of the working residents of the province were engaged in agriculture. In absolute figures, the number of farmers and farm workers has been declining ever since 1936 when it was at an all-time high of 217,000. Today fewer than 150,000 people in Saskatchewan work on its farms. The reason, of course, lies in the 60,000 tractors, 40,000 motor trucks, and almost as many grain combines, that Saskatchewan farmers have added to their equipment since 1931. It now takes fewer people and less effort to produce more, and the manpower replaced by horsepower moves to the towns and cities.

By the same token, the non-agricultural labor force has grown from approximately one-third in 1921 to over 51 per cent in 1951. Prior to 1936, the

TABLE 3.—FARM AND NON-FARM LABOUR FORCE, SASKATCHEWAN

Year	Total Labor Force	Farm Labor Force		Non-Farm Labor Force	
		Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
1911.....	208,522	133,008	63.8	75,514	36.2
1921.....	266,975	174,477	65.4	92,498	34.6
1931.....	338,911	204,472	60.3	134,439	39.7
1936.....	346,604	217,215	62.7	129,389	37.3
1941.....	315,446	187,416	59.3	128,430	40.7
1946.....	310,486	163,965	52.8	146,521	47.2
1947.....	308,811	160,688	52.0	148,123	48.0
1948.....	307,136	157,411	51.2	149,725	48.8
1949.....	305,461	154,134	50.4	151,327	49.6
1950.....	303,787	150,857	49.6	152,930	50.4
1951.....	302,112	147,580	48.8	154,532	51.2

70 per cent. There is more land under cultivation in Saskatchewan today than ever before—some 38 million acres as compared with 34 million in the early forties and only 30 million in the early thirties.

It is all the more interesting then, that as the returns for the 1951 census were tabulated it appeared for the first time in the history of the

trend was mixed, but in the last fifteen years the non-farm group has grown steadily.

### Urban Growth

In the mid-thirties, when Saskatchewan had a population of 931,000, just over 125,000 people lived in the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. Since then the number of resi-

dents in these four largest cities has increased by almost one-third, although the population for the province as a whole is now about 7.5 per cent lower than it was in 1936. As for the smaller centres, their rate of growth during this period has been even higher than that of the four leading cities. Communities in the five-to-ten-thousand population bracket have increased in size by some 45 per cent, and the towns with under 5,000 residents by somewhat less.

These figures shed much light on the movement that has occurred over the years in the distribution of manpower resources between rural and urban areas. In 1936 the combined working population of the four leading cities was approximately 49,000, representing 14 per cent of the total working force of the province. In 1951 the cities of Regina and Saskatoon alone had a working population in excess of 53,000, and the combined working population in the four leading cities was nearly 70,000, or 23 per cent of the provincial total. In the smaller centres the ranks of working men and women were likewise swelled, roughly in line with the growth in population.

### The Status Picture

If employers are taken together with persons who work for themselves, they are found to be roughly equal in number to all paid employees. A ratio like this is unique, but it is scarcely a surprising one in a province where farming is so important an occupation.

Of the two groups that do not work for wages, the employer class is by far the smaller. Mainly because of the gradual disappearance of the hired man from agriculture, the employer group has been

shrinking both absolutely and relatively since 1936, when it comprised an all-time high of 27 per cent of Saskatchewan's working population. By 1951 less than 8 per cent of all persons in the labor force were employers.

During the ten years before 1946 more than 60,000 farmers dispensed with hired help and became sole operators (thus changing from employer status to that of worker "on own account"). The proportion of own account workers accordingly rose from 16 per cent to nearly 38 per cent. In the mid-thirties, two-thirds of this group consisted of farmers and the remainder were one-man businesses. By 1946 the number of the latter was not appreciably greater than ten years before, but the number of sole farm operators had grown almost three times, with the result that farmers had come to represent more than five-sixths of all workers on own account.

Until recent years paid employees had been outnumbered by the two foregoing groups. But as non-farm industries grew in importance, so did the segment of salaried workers and wage earners. Paid employees now represent 49 per cent of the labor force as compared with 43 per cent in 1931.

Between them, employers, workers on own account, and employees comprise more than 90 per cent of the labor force. The balance is made up of unpaid workers who include farmers' sons and the relatives of other independent workers and employers. Of much greater importance in agriculture than in any other industry, the group of unpaid workers has continued to decline since the depressed thirties when, understandably, it accounted for as much as 15 per cent of the working population.

TABLE 4.—THE STATUS OF THE LABOUR FORCE  
(Percentage Distribution)

Year	Employers		Own Account Workers		Salary and Wage Earners		Non-Paid Workers	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
1931.....	18.1	(4.3)	25.2	(13.5)	43.0	(80.1)	13.7	(2.1)
1936.....	27.2	(4.9)	16.1	(13.2)	41.2	(78.4)	15.5	(3.5)
1941.....	13.6	(3.2)	33.1	(15.2)	40.7	(78.6)	12.6	(3.0)
1946.....	8.1	(4.0)	37.6	(12.5)	44.0	(81.3)	10.3	(2.2)
1951.....	7.8	(5.2)	36.1	(10.0)	49.1	(84.0)	7.0	(0.8)

Note.—Figures in brackets refer to non-farm labor force only.

### III. INDUSTRIES & OCCUPATIONS

One of the consequences of the movement of manpower from rural to urban places, and of the greater complexity of the modern urbanized economy, has been a change in the composition of the working population in terms of industries and occupations.

While both classifications are equally useful as a measure of the type and amount of human effort required in the production of goods and services, and illuminate the changing economic structure of a community, they are by no means the same thing. Although many industries and occupations are described by the same terms, they do not cover identical groups of persons. For example, an office clerk in a garment factory would be classified under *manufacturing* by industry, but under *clerical* by occupation, and a bank manager under *finance* by industry but under *proprietary and managerial* occupationally. It is therefore necessary to examine each classification.

#### Industries

Aside from the long-term decline in the numerical importance of agriculture, the most outstanding development in the industrial grouping of the labor force has been the increasing demand for distribu-

the early thirties, and only 17 per cent in 1911. Another group to show an upward trend, but on a more modest scale, is manufacturing which in 1951 accounted for 7 per cent of the labor force. Somewhat higher (about 8 per cent), and slightly above the national average, was the proportion of workers in transportation, storage and communications. This reflects a considerable gain over the preceding ten years, a good part of which was due to expansion of the telephone system and trucking. Those who are familiar with the sight of the distinctive prairie landmark—the grain elevators—will appreciate the fact that the storage industry, employing 3 thousand persons, is both relatively and absolutely the largest in Canada.

Of the remaining industrial groupings, construction has shown a decline, in terms of manpower, from around 7 per cent in 1911 to some 2 per cent in 1941, and even with the high level of activity in the post-war years it accounted for less than 4 per cent of Saskatchewan's labor force in 1951. This trend, of course, mirrors the saving in labor which mechanized equipment and new techniques have accomplished, particularly in the engineering branch of the construction industry. Last and not least, primary industries other than agriculture (which include mining, fishing, trapping and forestry) have, as a group, shown practically no relative change over the years and engage only about 1½ per cent of the labor force of the province. There

TABLE 5.—PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY

Industry	1911	1921	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951
Agriculture.....	63.8	65.4	60.3	62.7	59.3	52.8	48.9
Fishing and Trapping.....	.9 (2.4)	*	.6 (2.2)	.8 (2.2)	.9 (2.1)	.4 (.9)	.5 (.9)
Forestry and Logging.....	.2 (.6)	*	.1 (.2)	.1 (.4)	.3 (.8)	.3 (.7)	.2 (.5)
Mining.....	.3 (.9)	*	.2 (.6)	.4 (.9)	.3 (.8)	.3 (.6)	.6 (1.1)
Manufacturing.....	3.6 (10.0)	*	2.7 (6.8)	2.0 (5.3)	4.8 (11.9)	5.8 (12.3)	6.2 (12.2)
Electricity.....	†	†	.2 (.5)	.2 (.5)	.2 (.6)	.3 (.6)	.6 (1.2)
Construction.....	6.8 (18.9)	*	3.5 (8.9)	1.9 (5.2)	2.1 (5.1)	2.9 (6.1)	3.8 (7.5)
Transportation and Communication.....	6.8 (18.8)	*	6.4 (16.0)	6.1 (16.3)	5.9 (14.6)	6.9 (14.0)	7.9 (15.5)
Trade and Finance.....	7.0 (19.4)	*	7.9 (19.9)	8.1 (21.7)	9.1 (22.4)	9.8 (20.7)	12.8 (25.1)
Service.....	10.5 (29.0)	*	15.3 (38.7)	16.8 (44.9)	16.0 (39.4)	19.7 (41.7)	17.9 (34.9)
Not Stated.....	*	*	2.7 (6.7)	1.0 (2.6)	.9 (2.3)	1.1 (2.4)	.6 (1.1)

\*Not available.

†Included with manufacturing.

Note: Figures in brackets are per cent. of non-farm labor force.

tive and personal services. In 1951 the proportion of workers in this sector (i.e., trade, finance and service) represented almost 31 per cent of the working population as compared with 23 per cent in

has, however, been a shift in the manpower distribution within this group, particularly in the last decade. During this period the working force in mining almost doubled, mainly as a result of the

post-war development of oil and natural gas. Fishing, trapping and forestry on the other hand have shown a decline due, in part, to the introduction of conservation practices.

#### Occupations

The census occupational classification distinguishes between nearly 300 classes of work, which are grouped here into 13 major headings. The most significant fact that emerges from a comparison with earlier years is that a steadily increasing pro-

professional occupations. In the transportation, communication and service sector, railwaymen, followed by truck drivers, are most prominent in the first group, as are telephone operators and hotel and cafe workers (including waiters and waitresses) in the other two classifications.

The remaining groups, those concerned with physical production, claim a little more than 60 per cent of the labor force as compared with almost four-fifths before the First World War. Here the long-run decline in demand for manpower in

TABLE 6.—PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	1911	1921	1931	1936	1941	1946	1951
Proprietary and Managerial.....	3.9 (10.7)	5.6 (16.3)	4.4 (11.0)	4.4 (11.8)	4.3 (10.5)	5.9 (12.6)	6.7 (13.0)
Professional.....	2.9 (8.0)	4.3 (12.5)	4.7 (11.9)	4.5 (12.0)	4.7 (11.5)	4.8 (10.2)	6.2 (12.2)
Clerical.....	1.9 (5.3)	3.7 (10.7)	3.2 (8.0)	3.2 (8.2)	3.8 (9.4)	4.8 (10.1)	6.2 (12.1)
Agricultural.....	63.8	65.4	60.3	62.4	59.3	52.8	48.9
Fishing, Hunting and Trapping.....	.9 (2.4)	.3 (.8)	.5 (1.4)	.8 (2.1)	.8 (2.0)	.4 (.9)	.5 (.9)
Forestry and Logging.....	.2 (.6)	.1 (.4)	.1 (.2)	.1 (.3)	.3 (.7)	.2 (.5)	.2 (.4)
Mining.....	.3 (.9)	.1 (.4)	.2 (.5)	.3 (.8)	.3 (.6)	.2 (.4)	.3 (.5)
Manufacturing, Electricity Gas and Water.....	3.0 (8.4)	1.2 (3.6)	3.2 (8.1)	3.4 (9.1)	4.2 (10.2)	4.3 (9.2)	4.6 (9.1)
Construction.....	3.8 (10.6)	2.2 (6.4)	2.1 (5.4)	1.6 (4.2)	1.7 (4.2)	2.4 (5.1)	2.7 (5.3)
Transportation, Storage and Communication.....	5.6 (15.5)	3.7 (10.7)	4.7 (11.8)	4.2 (11.2)	4.4 (10.9)	5.3 (11.2)	6.8 (13.2)
Commerce and Finance.....	3.0 (8.4)	3.8 (10.9)	4.2 (10.6)	4.1 (11.0)	4.1 (10.2)	4.6 (9.6)	5.4 (10.6)
Service.....	5.3 (14.5)	6.3 (17.8)	6.9 (17.5)	8.2 (22.0)	9.4 (23.1)	10.7 (22.6)	7.6 (14.9)
Laborers.....	5.4 (14.9)	3.2 (9.4)	5.4 (13.6)	2.7 (7.2)	2.5 (6.3)	2.6 (5.5)	2.9 (5.8)
Not Stated.....	*	.1 (.4)	.1	.1	.2 (.4)	.6 (1.2)	.5 (1.1)

Note.—Figures in brackets are per cent of non-farm labor force.

portion of the working population is engaged in transporting or selling goods, record keeping, or rendering professional or personal services. Occupations of this description now claim well over a third of the total labor force in the province—39 per cent in 1951, as against 28 per cent twenty years ago, and not quite 23 per cent forty years earlier. These figures represent the combined weight of a variety of activities that come under the following headings: managerial, professional, clerical, commercial, transportation, communication, and service.

Clerical and commercial workers together comprise the bulk of the "white-collar" class, and now include nearly 12 per cent of all who are gainfully employed. In the professional group, which is half as numerous, teaching continues to be by far the most predominant occupation. Well represented, too, are graduate nurses, clergymen, and accountants, in that order. Medical men, engineers, and lawyers make up a large part of the balance of

farming and construction has been partly offset by the growing importance of manufacturing and processing occupations—the only group in the goods-producing sector to show a consistent increase. It is interesting to observe that mining as an occupation has not grown commensurately with the mining industry. A good proportion of those employed in mining are classed as clerical by occupation, since the industry, and particularly that part of it engaged in oil development, is in the preliminary exploratory stage. The overall picture suggests expanded employment in production and processing in future years.

These trends, of course, parallel those in the industrial composition of the working force. Taken together, they point in the direction of technological progress and economic diversification, with a corresponding shift in skills from a lower to a higher level.

## V. THE SOCIAL PATTERN

Regardless of social or economic philosophy, few persons care to leave the determination of their individual economic circumstances to the tender mercies of an impersonal market. The result is a multiplicity of organizations, often sanctioned by legislation, and designed to safeguard or enhance the well-being of this or that segment of the labor force. Some are restricted to clearly defined professions, such as law, medicine, or accountancy, and are vested with strict regulatory powers. Others are based somewhat loosely on status, as for instance, employers' organizations and chambers of commerce. A third type, which consists of farm and labor organizations, encompasses broad social groups, and will be considered in somewhat greater detail.

### Trade Unions

Throughout most of the history of the province, trade union membership has been confined to the railways, the building trades and the printing trades. In line with the historical pattern in the rest of the continent, union organization in the mass production industries grew out of the experience of the depression in the thirties, and expanded greatly in the next decade. In 1951, the total membership in the Saskatchewan trade-union movement had passed the 30,000 mark, of which about half, or nearly 16,000 members, belonged to unions affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress. Another 10,000 were in locals and internationals affiliated to the Canadian Congress of Labour. The remaining 4,500 were grouped in independent unions, chiefly the railroad brotherhoods.

By industry, the largest membership, of nearly 12,000, occurs in transportation, storage, and communication. The second largest group, some 9,000, are employed in the service industries, including government and health service. Another 5,000 members are to be found in manufacturing industries, and the remainder are scattered among mining, construction and trade.

The effects of unionization are difficult to assess. However, it can be noted that while membership doubled in Saskatchewan between 1944 and 1951 (a rate of growth not equalled elsewhere in Canada) the time lost through strikes has revealed no such phenomenal increase. Indeed, throughout the period, labor disputes resulted in less time lost in Sask-

atchewan, on a comparable basis, than in any other Canadian province except Prince Edward Island.

### Farm Organizations

Many of the circumstances and motives which led to the emergence of the conventional trade unions also operated to induce a quite similar development in the farm population. Each found themselves, as a numerous but unorganized group, confronted with a market in which there were strongly monopolistic elements. Neither could effectively withhold or influence supply in the face of falling prices.

As early as 1902, discontent with the practices of the grain companies and the railways led to the formation of the Territorial (Saskatchewan) Grain Growers Association. Four years later the Grain Growers Grain Company was set up as a co-operatively owned agency to receive grain from its members for sale directly to the Grain Exchange. A major difficulty that beset the grower's organization was its lack of elevator facilities. For a time the organized farmers campaigned for government ownership of elevators, but later they adopted the principle of co-operative ownership through the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company. Similar steps were taken by the farmers of Alberta and Manitoba.

During 1923 and 1924 the so-called Wheat Pools came into existence, first in Saskatchewan, and then in Manitoba and Alberta. These were a non-stock, non-profit, voluntary contract type of commodity pool. They bought out the facilities of the co-operative elevator companies, and through a joint Central Selling Agency marketed approximately half of the wheat produced on the prairies. The Central Selling Agency, after experiencing severe losses during the early thirties, was discontinued in 1935 with the creation by the federal government of the Canadian Wheat Board.

In 1927, as a result of a merger of the militant Farmers' Union of the twenties and the somewhat more conservative and older Grain Growers Association, yet another farm organization was incorporated under the name of the United Farmers of Canada. In 1950 it changed its name and became the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, and presently claims a membership of approximately half of the existing 112,000 farm units in the province.

Like the labor unions, farm organizations have constituted themselves a pressure group directed at governments at both the provincial and national levels. In economic terms, however, where labor unions have resorted to strikes and collective bargaining, farmers have evolved an extensive system of co-operative commercial organizations designed to secure for them a more equal footing in the market when buying equipment, or selling grain, livestock, and other agricultural commodities.

### Legislation

Labor legislation is to human resources what conservation legislation is to natural resources. Its object is to regulate the exploitation of labor and to maximize the welfare of the worker.

The Minimum Wage Act provides for the setting of minimum wages "to furnish the necessary cost of living." The current regulations call generally for a minimum of \$26.00 per week in the cities and larger towns. Elsewhere in the Province the minimum is \$24.50, but those employed in agriculture or as domestic servants in private homes are excepted. Regulations also stipulate that employees shall receive regular pay for eight statutory holidays and time and one-half if required to work on such days.

The Hours of Work Act limits most occupations in the cities and larger towns to an 8 hour day and a 44 hour week. These hours may be exceeded providing the employee is paid time and one-half for the excess hours. In the smaller centres, with some exceptions, overtime is required after a 48 hour week. As well, certain special conditional exemptions apply to specific groups or occupations. For example, one Order provides that one 11-hour

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The substantial increase in agricultural productivity which has occurred in the course of the past few decades can be ascribed in large measure, as noted earlier, to farm mechanization and the increasing size of farm units. While the resulting displacement of rural population contributed heavily to the growth of urban development, it would be erroneous to conclude that the capacity of agriculture to generate employment had diminished by a corresponding amount. What has occurred can be described in part as an evolution of the agricultural

day per week may be worked in stores in certain towns before overtime is payable.

The Annual Holidays Act requires that the great majority of employees in the Province receive two weeks vacation with pay after each year of employment. Equal pay for equal work is stipulated by The Equal Pay Act which provides for the payment of equal wages to men and women who perform work of comparable character in the same establishment.

Accident compensation is covered by two statutes. The great majority of industries are governed by The Workmen's Compensation (Accident Fund) Act, a collective liability type of legislation that provides for 75 per cent compensation. The Workmen's Compensation Act, which provides for employer liability and 100 per cent compensation, covers employees in certain railway running trades.

An important statute is The Trade Union Act, 1944, which guarantees to all employees, including employees of the Crown, the right to organize into unions of their own choice and to bargain collectively with their employers with respect to wages and other working conditions. The Act is administered by a Labor Relations Board which, amongst other things, has power to determine whether labor organizations are *bona fide* trade unions, to require employers to bargain collectively with unions found to be representative of the majority of employees concerned, and to require persons to refrain from engaging in unfair labor practices. The Act establishes union security by requiring, that at the request of an employee, union dues be checked off by the employer and paid to the union and also by providing for "maintenance of membership" in the union. The Act also provides for voluntary conciliation and arbitration procedures to facilitate the settlement of labor-management disputes.

industry into more roundabout methods of production. Much non-farm employment is in reality an extension of some aspect of agriculture—whether it be assembly, sale, and maintenance of farm implements, or the storage, processing, and transportation of agricultural products. The increase in such employment, in fact, is an essential element in the increase in agricultural productivity.

The sustained high incomes of recent years have also contributed to the increase in employment. As

higher standards of living have become attainable, not only is more being consumed in the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter, but new demands have been created for health, welfare, and other similar services, with a resulting increase in professional and service occupations. Higher incomes, too, permit of greater leisure and entail the purchase of goods and services that formerly were self-provided. Inevitably, some part of the employment occurring during highly prosperous times consists, figuratively speaking, of taking in one another's washing.

Apart from all this, however, there has been a very real broadening of the province's economic base as a result of the recent developments in the mining industries, and the prospects for further development along these lines are highly promising. The end of the readjustment process in agriculture

is not yet in sight, and with the periodic uncertainties that cloud the market, it is increasingly necessary that non-agricultural industries continue to be developed. The rate at which this occurs, will, in the final analysis, determine whether the current trend in population (and labor force) growth will continue, or be replaced by stagnation or decline.

In the long run the outlook is an encouraging one. The mainstay of the provincial economy will continue to be agriculture, supplemented by fuels and metals. The latter two resources already occupy a favorable position in the world economy from which they will not readily be dislodged. As for agriculture, the domestic demand for food will continue to grow as the population grows, while in the world at large the evidence suggests that the terms of trade between the agricultural and the industrialized regions are tending to shift in favor of the former as time goes on.

NOTE:—Volume 2 of the *Economic Review* contained three numbers, and the present issue is consecutive with the one dated September, 1953.

*Enquiries concerning the Saskatchewan Economic Review should be directed to the Secretary, Economic Advisory & Planning Board, Legislative Building, Regina, Saskatchewan.*