

INVENTORY VALUES: Total inventory values in Canadian manufacturing industries appear to have fallen slightly at the end of April for the second consecutive month, according to preliminary reports received by the Bureau of Statistics.

The Bureau's preliminary index of estimated inventory values at the end of the month stood at 130.6 per cent of the average 1947 value as against a revised 132.5 per cent at the end of March. The decline is the largest in total value since the Bureau began the series in January, 1947. It may indicate, the Bureau says, that the rate of postwar inventory accumulation, which had been decreasing during 1948, may have reached its peak in February.

Among the main industry groupings, inventory values in the consumers' goods industries declined slightly in the month, the Bureau's index for these industries showing a drop of 1.5 points from the February and March point of 130.3 to 128.8. The index for the capital goods industries fell by 9.2 points and at 111.6 was 26 points below the high reached last November. In the producers' goods industries the level remained virtually unchanged from March, the index being five points below the high of 142.3 at the end of January, but in the construction goods industries the index reached a new high of 165.2, two points above the March level. However, figures for sawmills, the largest component of the latter group, are not yet available.

A breakdown of the consumers' goods group shows that inventories of non-durable consumers' goods fell by 2.5 points, the food industries -- largest component of this group -- showing a two-point drop. Greatest changes from March was a nine-point rise in the fish curing and packing industry and an eight-point drop in the fruit and vegetable preparations industry. Value of stocks in the majority of food industries was above 1948 level, the greatest differences being in the fish curing and packing industry, index for which was at 150.4 as against 65.3 in April last year.

In the producers' goods group, inventories in the iron and steel industries rose by five points and in the non-ferrous metals industries fell by four points. In the construction goods industries, bridge building and structural steel showed a six-point rise, while inventories in the cement industry dropped seasonally by 40 points and planing mills by 20 points.

FOREIGN VEHICLE ENTRIES: Foreign vehicle entries into Canada continued to increase in May, rising 13 per cent over the corresponding month last year, the gain being the same as that recorded in the first five months of the year. There were increases in the number of entries in practically all provinces both in the month and cumulative period.

RETAIL SALES UP: The value of Canada's retail trade was sharply higher in April when sales reached \$669,000,000 and exceeded April, 1948, dollar volume of \$573,000,000 by 17 per cent. The occurrence of Easter and the prevalence of favourable weather conditions in April this year were partially responsible for the high level of consumer spending. Last year seasonal Easter buying was concentrated in March. Tax reductions provided in the budget released additional purchasing power which also helped to swell retail sales.

Sales in the January-to-April period of 1949 were \$2,211,610,000, while volume in the same period of last year amounted to \$2,055,590,000, a gain of eight per cent.

The April increase was the largest recorded in several months and is in contrast to the more moderate gains in earlier months of the year. The advance in January was one per cent, February five per cent, and March, six per cent.

Easter's effect was felt more sharply by some trades than others. It was probably important in bringing about the considerable increases recorded by apparel, variety and department stores. Sizeable gains for the automotive, food and jewellery stores must be attributed mainly to other factors.

In the Prairie Provinces, where sales have been expanding at a rapid rate for some time, exceptionally high sales volumes were recorded in April. Increases in total trade amounted to 50 per cent in Saskatchewan, 38 per cent in Alberta, and 27 per cent in Manitoba compared with April a year ago, evidence of the promising outlook occasioned by oil well development and its effect on related enterprises in Western Canada. Announcement in March of a 20-cent increase in the price of wheat, retroactive to 1945, gave added buoyancy to trade in the Prairie Provinces. Other parts of the country shared in lesser degree the prosperous April trade, increases ranging from eight per cent in the Maritime Provinces to 15 per cent in Ontario.

CADET TRADES TRAINING: From Royal Canadian Army Cadet units all across Canada an expected 1,675 youths will arrive at special camps in July to begin a 42-day trades training course. The course is the outcome of a highly successful experiment conducted last summer on a small scale. Officials were so pleased with results and the keen interest shown by the youngsters last year that it was decided to expand the program into this summer's size and scope.

The subjects to be covered include driver mechanic, signalling for all arms, operated fire control and engineering equipment, and medical assistance.

CANADA'S RECORD HIGH EMPLOYMENT

A "GOOD YEAR" REPORTED: The Minister of Labour, Mr. Mitchell, on June 18, issued the following summary of the Eighth Annual Report of the Unemployment Insurance Commission for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1949.

The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1940 provided the basis for unification of two distinct functions which are interwoven in their operation and essential to each other. The National Employment Service and the unemployment insurance system work hand in hand; neither could function successfully without the other.

There are 298 Unemployment Insurance Commission-National Employment Service offices throughout Canada including three new offices which have been opened in Newfoundland.

EMPLOYMENT - Canada has had a "good year". It was featured by industrial growth and record high employment. With the total labour force at an all-time high of 5,109,000 in September, 1948, 5,042,000 workers were employed. There were of course seasonal contractions, but at no time was there any serious widespread unemployment.

1,149,707 VACANCIES

As evidence of the confidence of the Canadian public in the National Employment Service, it is a fact that employers notified the offices of 1,149,707 vacancies or opportunities for employment and all but a very small percentage of the vacancies were filled. The few which went unfilled were for special classes or registered during times when men were in short supply. In fact, a number of large organizations have informed the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and the public, that they now do their entire hiring through the Employment Service.

During periods of greatest seasonal contraction occurring in the past year, the total number of unplaced applicants registered in local offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission was slightly in excess of four per cent of the labour force. While in some areas of the Maritime Provinces and in British Columbia the number of persons seasonally out of work was higher than in other districts, it may be said that all sections of the country and all industries shared in the general prosperity.

There was considerable demand for skilled workers in manufacturing industries, notably in textiles, iron and steel, woodworking and furniture, pulp and paper, chemicals and printing and publishing, throughout the year.

Employment in building and construction reached a record high point. A considerable number of skilled workmen was added to the industry's labour force through immigration from the United Kingdom, and from apprentice-

ship training. Telephone and power companies expanded facilities and thus contributed to the demand for labour. Workers in all branches of the transportation industry were well employed. The Employment Service recruited labour for the various seasonal agricultural movements with a minimum of difficulty and a maximum of service to farm employers and workers alike. The demand for woods workers in most areas was considerably reduced in comparison with that of former years. With the country's working population augmented by the admission of European immigrants, recruiting of labour for the mining industry became easier, and at year-end demand and supply were practically in balance in the industry.

Some 12,000 workers were transferred within Canada to industrial, farm, woods and other employments, some over distances of 1,500 miles, including transfers totalling nearly 5,500 effected in group movements. In addition to these the Employment Service took part in nine international group transfers.

50,610 DISPLACED PERSONS

During the year a total of 50,610 displaced persons were admitted to Canada. Of this number 20,434 were selected overseas by representatives of the Department of Labour and placed in employment by the National Employment Service. This group included some 6,500 domestics and household workers and approximately 4,000 persons for agricultural employment. The remaining 30,176 displaced persons who entered Canada during the year came as close relatives of residents of Canada or were admitted on the nomination of employers. A substantial proportion of this group were employable people who were placed in employment through the National Employment Service. In addition 500 skilled workers from Malta were admitted for specified employment.

In August, 1948, an office of the National Employment Service was opened in London, England, to promote emigration to Canada from the United Kingdom in co-operation with the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources.

During the fiscal year more than 40,000 British emigrants came to Canada. Many of them, without special trade skill, were eager to find a new life in agriculture or through employment in Canada's mines and forests. Among the new arrivals, however, were also technical and professional workers and many skilled craftsmen and artisans whose training and experience assured them a welcome in Canadian industry.

Through its special placement facilities the Employment Service succeeded in finding jobs for more than 13,600 handicapped workers, about 6,000 of whom were disabled ex-Service men and about 100 ex-Service women.