

# Provincial Statistics of Trade and Industry

## Shipbuilding Last Year Had the Largest Payroll—Mining Payroll Exceeded Lumber Payroll—Average Increase in Rates of Wages and Decrease in Hours of Labor.

The efforts which were begun soon after the department was established to obtain the most complete and reliable set of figures possible as to the wages, working-hours, and nationality of manual workers throughout the Province have been continued during the past year. In the statistics given in the last annual report it was not practicable to cover a period of more than seven months. In the present instance, and for the first time, a full year is taken—from August 1st, 1918, to July 31st, 1919. The latter date was selected in order to give employers the necessary time to supply the required information and for the department's limited staff to analyse and tabulate the same.

The information supplied in the tables is based upon returns furnished by 1,206 firms, as compared with 1,047 last year. These are classified among the different trades in the same way as last year, but on this occasion the figures are given for three additional industries—fish-canneries, fruit and vegetable canneries, and laundries, cleaning, and dyeing. Several other trades and occupations which were omitted last year are again omitted for various reasons. These include: (a) The operation of railways and farms; (b) other trades and callings where it was found difficult to draw a distinct line between employees engaged as salesmen and those engaged as workmen; (c) express companies, hotel and restaurant employees, Dominion and Provincial Government employees.

In addition to the returns which have been classified in the following pages, a number were received relating to trades which it was not possible to include, while in the trades that have been included a number of firms sent in their returns too late for their figures to be added to the totals in the appropriate tables. The information was collected by means of a questionnaire, a copy of which was sent to every firm engaged in industrial pursuits operating in the Province.

The questionnaire last year asked for particulars regarding the number employed in the management and office staff of each firm and the total wages in that department, but it was not found practicable to press for this return or to tabulate such information as was supplied under this head. Consequently this question was omitted from the form of inquiry this year.

In the table relating to wage-earners the average number employed in each month is given. This, be it noted, is not the actual or total numbers employed. If, for example, a firm employed 10 workmen in the first week of the month, 30 in the second week, 40 in the third week, and 20 in the fourth week, the average number employed during the month would be 25, and this would be the figure which the return asks from the firm. A comparison of totals with those of the first seven months of 1918 is only of limited value. Obviously the same persons are not included, and some of the firms making returns last year did not do so this year, and vice versa. The figures this year show an increase, ranging up to 7 per cent., in five of the seven months, but a slight decrease in April and a decrease of about 5 per cent in June, the month of the general strike in the coast cities. The number of females shows an increase for every month.

For the reason mentioned above, any conclusions based upon a comparison of any of the tables with the corresponding tables for the previous year cannot be accepted as absolutely reliable; but the general effect of the two sets of figures is to reflect certain changes which were in progress during the two years. The tables of classified weekly wage-rates show a decided upward tendency in the Province with regard to rates of pay. The figures for rates of pay for adult males range from "under \$6 weekly" (there are 11

under this heading as compared with 19 in the previous year) to \$50 weekly and over, where the number for 1918 was 825 and for last year 1,289. Generally speaking, there is an increase in the number receiving the higher wages and a decrease in the number receiving the lower wages. As exact figures regarding individual rates of pay are not requested in the return, any attempt to work out average rates of pay from these figures would be misleading; but the general tendency may be illustrated by a division of the adult male wage-earners into three classes—viz., those receiving less than \$20 per week; those receiving from \$20 to \$30 per week; and those receiving more than \$30 per week. In these three classes the comparison is as follows:

Class 1.—Under \$20 per week: 1918, 7,567 or 16.77 per cent of the whole; 1919, 7,136 or 12.68 per cent.

Class 2.—Between \$20 and \$30 per week: 1918, 20,334 or 45.07 per cent; 1919, 25,490 or 45.32 per cent.

Class 3.—Over \$30 per week: 1918, 17,227 or 38.18 per cent; 1919, 23,615 or 41.98 per cent.

The percentages for 1918 are worked out on a total of 45,110 adult male wage-earners and those for 1919 on a total of 56,241.

Not only did the changes in the wages of females conform to the same general rule, showing a greater number receiving the higher wages and a smaller number receiving the lower wages, but the operation of the "Minimum Wage Act" almost automatically raised the wages of many of the worse-paid women and girls. In last year's report wages paid to females showed the peak—that is, the largest number to receive a particular figure—at between \$10 and \$11; for the year now under review it is between \$13 and \$14. In reference to the "Minimum Wage Act," it should be borne in mind that in the manufacturing group of industries the order of the board did not become effective until September 1st, 1919.

Among the industries paying the largest amount in wages during the year the leading position is held by shipbuilding, with a payroll of \$10,223,844.67. Next in order come: Coal mining, \$7,391,088.19; saw milling, \$4,800,098.17; metal mining, \$4,527,802.30; logging, \$3,823,428.23; pulp and paper manufacturing, \$3,774,469.62; smelting, \$2,920,040.48; machine shops, \$2,319,569.14; lumbering, \$1,450,229.33; shingle mills, \$1,324,798.79; general contracting, \$1,314,734.78; coast shipping, \$1,109,320.03; and fish canneries, \$1,008,646.15. To take two groups of industries, those incidental respectively to the Province's forests and her mineral wealth, we find that the groups comprising the industries of logging, logging-railways, lumbering, lumber dealers, manufacture of wood, planing mills, saw milling and shingle mills show an aggregate wage list of \$12,945,501.58; while the other group, comprising coal mining, metal mining and smelting, show an aggregate of \$14,818,930.97. If complete returns could be obtained from these industries they would doubtless show greatly enhanced totals.

In hours of labor there is a downward tendency as compared with the previous year. Of the total number whose hours are given in the returns for 1918-19, nearly one-half, or 49.78 per cent, work 48 hours per week or less, while in the previous year the corresponding percentage was 44.03. The number whose hours were over 60 per week dropped from 676 in 1918 to 145 in 1919. Of the fifty groups of industries enumerated, there were eight which worked 52 weeks in the year; nine worked from 50 to 52 weeks; 16 from 45 to 50 weeks; eight from 40 to 45 weeks; while the following, taking the general average of their returns, worked less than 40 weeks: Shingle mills 32.8 weeks; saw milling, 35.8 weeks; metal mining, 38.1 weeks; lumbering, 39.8 weeks; logging, 37.1 weeks; general contracting, 24.3 weeks; fruit and vegetable canneries, 29.5 weeks; fish canneries, 29.5 weeks; fertilizers and chemicals, 31.7 weeks; building trades, 39.3 weeks.