

The year 1953 has been another period of record achievement in the Canadian economy. Industrial output has increased substantially. Crops, particularly grains, are again exceptionally good though somewhat below last year's record. Even with some decline in agriculture total production in the economy has risen by about five per cent from last year's level. This is roughly the same increase as that achieved in each of the three preceding years.

This rise in production has been accompanied by a further increase in employment. The civilian labour force, augmented by large numbers of new immigrants, has continued to increase in 1953. Non-agricultural employment is moderately higher but numbers employed in agriculture have continued to decline. As the year progressed, total employment has not quite kept pace with the rise in the labour force. On the whole, however, there has been no scarcity of jobs; and unemployment, though a little higher than a year ago has remained at a low level.

Reflecting the overall expansion in output, incomes have increased significantly during the year. The principal exception has been in agriculture, which has been affected by lower production and also by declines in the prices of some commodities. Nevertheless, farm income in 1953, though below the unusually high levels of 1951-52, remains well above that of preceding years. Wage and salary earnings have continued to increase. Total labour income in the first nine months of 1953 was ten per cent above the corresponding period in 1952. Average weekly earnings at the present time are running about six per cent ahead of a year ago. In addition, most other income groups have achieved gains over the past year.

Not only have money incomes on the average been higher in 1953, but people have been able to buy a little more with each income dollar. Prices of consumer goods and services have averaged about one per cent lower this year than last. Rising money incomes and slightly declining prices together have provided the basis for a rise in living standards which became apparent in 1952 and has continued this year. In 1952, real per capita consumption in Canada rose by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent over that of the previous year, the first significant gain since 1947. A greater increase has occurred in 1953.

In the period prior to mid-1952, much of the increase in production and employment could be traced to defence expenditure and to intensified world demand for strategic materials. Since that time, however, the main impetus has come from increased demands for consumer goods and services.

#### The Consumer Market

The increase in consumer buying has been widely spread throughout all the main consumer groups, including soft as well as hard goods. Food consumption, for example, has risen by 12 per cent in a two-year period. In 1953 meats in particular, and especially beef and veal, were consumed in much greater quantities, reflecting, in part, the considerable reduction in price. Clothing sales, despite unusually mild weather conditions, have