

EMPLOYMENT RISE: Employment increased and unemployment decreased approximately in accordance with the normal seasonal trend during the two-month period ending May 22. The increase in employment during April, however, was slower than usual, largely because of bad weather which retarded the spring pick-up in farming and construction. During May, on the other hand, outdoor activities increased slightly more than is usual for the month, the Department of Labour reported on June 23.

While manufacturing employment was somewhat below last year's level, employment in trade, finance and services, as well as in some outdoor activities, made small year-to-year gains. The number of persons at work increased during the two months by approximately the same amount as last year and unemployment dropped at the same rate as last year.

Although labour requirements increased substantially during May and thus reduced labour surpluses in most labour market areas, unemployment continued to be considerably higher than last year, particularly in a number of larger urban centres.

Reduced employment in a number of manufacturing industries such as iron and steel products, textiles, clothing, aircraft and parts, motor vehicles and parts, railway rolling stock, leather and rubber products contributed largely to the higher unemployment levels.

The civilian labour force, at 5,392,000 in the week ended May 22, 1954, showed little change from 5,257,000 in the week ended April 17, 1954, and an increase of somewhat under 1 per cent from 5,321,000 recorded in the week ended May 16, 1953. These estimates are obtained from the monthly labour force survey conducted by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

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NURSING ASSISTANTS: A class of female nursing assistants is being enrolled for Active Force service in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. After training they will be posted to various military hospitals in Canada, the Department of National Defence has announced.

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Motion pictures for theatre and television presentation, advertising, educational and other purposes were produced in Canada last year by 32 commercial firms and nine federal and provincial Government agencies.

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Railways retired 141 locomotives and put 236 new ones into service in 1952, the net gain of 95 bringing the total in operation to 4,810. Of the steam types, coal-burners decreased to 3,423 from 3,553 and oil-burners increased to 591 from 555. Diesel electrics increased to 763 from 574.

EXTEND DEFENCE PRODUCTION: The Minister of Defence Production, Mr. C.D. Howe, announced in the House of Commons on June 22 the intention of the Government to extend the life of the Department of Defence Production beyond the five year period specified in the governing act.

He said, in part:

"When the Minister of National Defence was discussing his estimates, he spoke of the long-range planning of the NATO alliance, which has been described as the 'long haul' approach. He also indicated that, although modest reductions in defence budgets were possible during the next few years, current commitments and the need to maintain our position of active and effective preparedness would require substantial defence expenditures for a number of years.

"This obviously means that there will be a continuing requirement for an efficient procurement organization. . . .

"We find that, because the life of the Department is limited to five years under the terms of the Defence Production Act, there is a tendency for some members of the staff to seek other employment that apparently provides more security. Furthermore, we have found that the temporary nature of the Department is often a deterrent to well qualified men who have considered joining us."

"Under these circumstances, I believe that it is appropriate to announce now that it is the Government's intention to seek, during the next session of Parliament, an amendment to the Defence Production Act which will put the life of the Department on a more permanent basis."

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PRODUCTION INDEX DOWN: Canada's index number of the volume of industrial production for April stood at 242.9, down 4.6% from last year's 254.5, according to advance figures. During the first four months of the year the composite index averaged about 3% below a year earlier.

The manufacturing component of April's index was down more than 6%, while the index of the electricity and gas sector declined slightly in the same comparison. By contrast, mineral production increased more than 5%.

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Water-power resources of Canada would allow an economic turbine installation of close to 66,000,000 h.p. under present hydraulic practice. Less than 22% of this potential is being utilized at present.

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Manufacturing provides nearly one-third of the national income - over twice the income from agriculture and five times the income from logging, mining and fishing combined.