

**EMPLOYMENT SITUATION:** Employment declined during February slightly more than is usual in Canada for this month. Unemployment also increased somewhat more than seasonally. During the month ending February 20, full-time employment (35 hours or more) dropped slightly while part-time employment (less than 35 hours) rose slightly. Full-time employment, which accounted for 85 per cent of all persons in the labour force, was approximately two per cent below year-ago levels.

Labour requirements continued to decline during the month in the Atlantic and Quebec regions, primarily owing to seasonal reductions in logging and lumbering operations. Employment levelled off in the Ontario and the Prairie regions largely because of an increase in construction activity following the severe January weather. The usual seasonal pick-up in outdoor activity occurred in the Pacific region.

Employment levels declined somewhat more than seasonally in the forestry, mining and iron and steel industries. Some further softening in employment also appeared in textiles and clothing. During the month, a moderate increase in employment occurred in the transportation equipment manufacturing industry.

The civilian labour force, at 5,230,000 in the week ended February 20, 1954, was down from 5,242,000 in the week ended January 23, 1954, but up slightly compared with 5,194,000 recorded in the week ended February 21, 1953. These estimates are obtained from the monthly labour force survey conducted by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

\* \* \* \* \*

**MEAT CONSUMPTION RISES:** Canadians ate more beef, veal and mutton and lamb but less pork per person in 1953 than in 1952. Supply-price relationships, with pork in shorter supply and higher in price than during 1952 and the opposite situation for beef, resulted in this expression of consumer preferences at the meat counter. Per capita consumption of all meats, on a cold dressed carcass weight basis, rose to 140.1 pounds from 132.9 pounds in 1952.

\* \* \* \* \*

**JANUARY FARM PRICES UP:** Higher prices for livestock and foods more than offset lower quotations for poultry and eggs in January and the Bureau's index of farm prices of agricultural products advanced to 233.2 from 229.4 in December but was appreciably below the January level of last year when the index registered 263.7.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NAVAL ATTACHE:** Lieut.-Cdr. G.A.C. Scarth, 43, of Lennoxville, Que., and Charlottetown, P.E.I., has assumed the appointment of Naval Attaché to the Canadian Minister to Sweden and Finland, with the acting rank of Commander.

**RECORD YEAR FOR POLYMER:** The Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe, tabled the annual report of Polymer Corporation Limited in the House of Commons on March 18. Mr. Howe remarked that 1953 was another record year for Polymer. This is especially noteworthy in view of the fact that for the greater part of the year all grades of natural rubber sold below the prevailing prices for synthetic.

The total volume of sales reached an all-time high, giving a gross income of \$50,614,959. This resulted in a net profit of \$5,097,638, after allowances of \$5,036,831 for depreciation, \$4,946,000 for income tax, and \$254,904 for debenture interest. The company paid \$3,000,000 in dividends during the year and retired \$3,000,000 principal of 4% Serial Debentures, leaving \$4,000,000 outstanding.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES:** After two days' discussion between representatives of the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland, it was announced on March 22 by the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Sinclair, that both Governments had recognized that the federal Government, from March 31, 1954 next, would have exclusive jurisdiction over the Newfoundland fisheries, but that the fisheries have such paramount importance in Newfoundland that the federal Government would always wish to consult the Provincial Government with respect to important departures in policy, but would have to take the final responsibility for all decisions.

The governmental responsibility for marketing will, from April 1, 1954, be exercised by the Minister of Trade and Commerce and all other governmental responsibility in fishery matters will be exercised by the Minister of Fisheries.

\* \* \* \* \*

**WHEAT MARKETING:** Visible supplies of Canadian wheat on March 3 amounted to 366,651,000 bushels, down slightly from the 367,048,000 bushels in store a week earlier, but 37.5% larger than last year's corresponding total of 266,515,000 bushels, according to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Overseas export clearances of wheat during the week fell to 1,702,000 bushels from 3,459,000 a year earlier, and the cumulative total for the period August 1 - March 3 declined to 122,866,000 bushels from 159,741,000.

\* \* \* \* \*

**BANKRUPTCIES UP:** Nearly 10% more commercial failures were recorded under the provisions of the Bankruptcy and Winding Up Acts in 1953 than in the preceding year, and their defaulted liabilities rose 11%. During the year the number of business failures was 1,657 as compared with 1,509, and the liabilities aggregated \$32,818,000 as compared with \$29,658,000.