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Employment and Unemployment in Quebec

by STANISLAS PICARD, Manager, Quebec Office, Unemployment Insurance Commission

A definition is given of the live files of employment seekers at the local office of the National Employment Service of the Unemployment Insurance Commission followed by figures of the duration of unemployment, of hirings and separations (labour turn-over) for six months, from September 1949 to February 1950 inclusively; and an explanation is given of how the Act makes sure that payment of benefit is made to insured job seekers only after they have shown they belong effectively to the labour market.

Live files of applications for employment

They are made up of the applications of workers presently looking for work. Whether insured or not, all applicants receive the same consideration for placement. Chances of being selected for presentation to employers in view of hiring depend on the workers' occupational competence and on vacancies reported by employers. An application remains in the live file so long as the applicant desires. Applications are revised from month to month or more often.

Duration of unemployment

The following figures are taken from the files of male claimants.

At September 30th, 1949

For 1,936 men claiming, there were unemployed for	
6 days or less	517
7 days to 12 days	173
13 days to 24 days	259
25 days to 48 days	296

49 days to 72 days	189
Over 72 days (more than 3 months)	502

At December 31st, 1949

For 6,019 men claiming, there were unemployed for	
6 days or less	1,614
7 days to 12 days	1,057
13 days to 24 days	1,190
25 days to 48 days	1,059
49 days to 72 days	466
Over 72 days (more than 3 months)	633

At February 28th, 1950

For 7,544 men claiming, there were unemployed for	
6 days or less	1,055
7 days to 12 days	624
13 days to 24 days	1,013
25 days to 48 days	1,952
49 days to 72 days	1,570
Over 72 days (more than 3 months)	1,330
(Sundays are excluded. Six days make a week.)	

Statistics of male claimants, at a given date, show that the majority have been unemployed for less than two months.

The number of claimants unemployed more than 3 months is lowest at September 30th; highest at the end of February, when the annual seasonal unemployment has set in and prevailed for several months.

In considering the hirings and separations that took place in 900 establishments employing 10 or more workers, from September 1949 to February 1950 inclusively, it is found that the number of hirings, while less than the number of separations, was still considerable. It is an indication that many separate from employment for a relatively short time.

SUMMARY OF HIRINGS AND SEPARATIONS OF 900 EMPLOYERS OF QUEBEC CITY WITH TEN EMPLOYEES OR MORE, FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER, 1949 TO FEBRUARY, 1950

	Average on pay-rolls during period	Hirings	Separations	Total on pay-rolls at beginning of period	Total on pay-rolls at end of period	Average percentage of number on pay-rolls during period	
						Hirings	Separations
Total — all industries							
Men	32,360	10,002	14,546	34,547	34,500	30,91	44,95
Women	12,654	3,524	4,370	13,009	13,029	27,85	34,53
September 1949							
Men		2,452	2,499				
Women		684	664				
October 1949							
Men		1,904	3,001		33,403		
Women		690	733		12,986		
November 1949							
Men		1,957	2,587		32,113		
Women		533	623		14,050		
December 1949							
Men		1,097	2,898		30,912		
Women		543	997		---		
January 1950							
Men		1,388	2,036		---		
Women		483	869		12,050		
February 1950							
Men		1,204	1,525		30,000		
Women		591	484		12,163		

A guarantee of the Act

Is it possible to live in idleness and draw unemployment insurance benefits?

From the start, Parliament was careful to make sure that those who claim benefits must first prove that they belong to the labour market; i.e., that they have worked recently a substantial number of days in insurable employment.

The Commission is not satisfied to know that a man has worked at some time or other in the past, or has recently worked for a short period.

The insured unemployed worker must show that he has contributed at least 180 times to the insurance fund

in the last two years. That means having worked at least 180 days.

Of the 180 contributions, at least 60 must have been made within a year or 45 within six months; i.e., evidence must be shown of a substantial and recent work history.

The seasonal character of a large fraction of our economy inevitably forces considerable time losses upon many workers. If there be added time losses due to technological progress, structural unemployment, sickness, shortage of materials, legitimate vacations, legal and religious holidays, etc., it may be seen that the insured can establish their future rights to benefits only by putting up a substantial measure of assiduous attendance to work.

Conciliation Statistics

During the first three months of the current year, the Quebec Conciliation Department looked after 155 conciliation cases for 1959 establishments covering 73,747 employees of which 41,670 were directly concerned. Of these cases, 57 were in the process of settlement at the beginning of January, 1951 and 69 at the end of March, 1951.

These cases have been submitted to the Conciliation Service under the authority of two Provincial laws: The Quebec Labour Relations Act, R.S.Q., 1941, Chapt. 162A, and the Quebec Trade Disputes Act, R.S.Q. 1941, Chapt. 167.

Under the first law, 27 cases concerning 5,240 employees have been submitted regarding new agreements while 82 cases concerning 20,171 employees have been, regarding renewal of agreements. Under the second law, one case concerning 400 employees has been submitted regarding a new agreement, while 10 cases concerning 13,417 employees have been, regarding renewal of agreements and 35 cases concerning 2,442 employees have been, about grievances.

Of these 155 cases, during the first three months of the year, 86 have been settled,

of which 54, covering more than 20,491 employees, in a satisfactory manner to the parties; 6 concerning 226 employees, in an indefinite manner and 26, covering 7,325 employees have been referred to arbitration.

All these conciliation cases are divided amongst the various unions in the following manner: Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (CCCL) submitted to conciliation 81 cases, concerning 23,566 employees; The Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) submitted 18 for 3,910 employees; the Trades and Labour Congress, 10 cases, covering 1,366 employees; the Trades and Labour Congress unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labour (TLC-AFL) 26 cases for 8,686 employees; the Canadian Congress of Labour affiliated to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CCL-CIO) has submitted 15 cases for 3,510 employees; finally, the local or national independent unions have submitted 5 cases, concerning 632 employees.

In conclusion, we are listing the different subjects submitted to conciliation and the number of cases in which these subjects have been discussed.