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Salary Trends of Employees of the Wholesale Food Trade of Quebec

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The attributions of the committees are more or less extended, in accordance with the real power with which it is desired to entrust them and, on the other hand, in accordance with the mission that it is wanted to reserve for the unions.

In respect to working conditions, these usually include the application of rules concerning hygiene and workers' safety, suggestions towards these ends, discussion of shop rules and the direction of possible social institutions. Consultation in cases of hiring and discharge is frequent but without being general.

Committees of enterprise very seldom intervene in collective conflicts and in collective agreements which are a domain reserved to the unions.

On the other hand, all laws instruct the committees of enterprise to gather and transmit all suggestions to improve the efficiency of an enterprise. The furnishing of certain accounting records is prescribed almost everywhere, but the nature of the records and the enterprises under this obligation vary from one country to another. The designation of accountants to aid the committee in the examination of these records is only provided for in France besides our own country. In a general way, the committees have only an advisory part to play in economic matters. They leave to the employer the responsibility of conducting the business.

The common characteristics of committees of enterprise may be formulated as follows: the committee is composed of representatives elected by the different categories of the personnel, as proposed by the union organizations; it does not interfere with the management of the business, but it disposes of advisory attributions regarding efficiency, organization and general progress of the enterprise, apprenticeship and professional training, hiring and discharge; it intervenes in a more or less important way in the administration of the welfare and social organizations of the enterprise, and in the application of the rules relating to working conditions, hygiene and workers' safety.

SALARY TRENDS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE WHOLESALE FOOD TRADE OF QUEBEC

RAYMOND GAGNÉ

A statistical survey has been made recently in the Wholesale Food Trade of the City of Quebec and surrounding district.

The end in view was to establish a statistical relation between the salaries fixed by the decrees under the Collective Agreement Act and the salaries paid by the employers. We have deviated slightly from this end because the salaries decreed were too rigid to calculate averages which should have been then compared with the averages actually paid. This is the reason that our statistical study has been only of the salaries paid by the employers, with references to the decrees themselves in order to establish the necessary comparisons.

The statistics that we are presenting in this Bulletin come from figures submitted to the Quebec City and District Wholesale Food Trade Parity Committee by the employers subject to the decrees regulating this category of business. In the employers' reports, we have found all the desired information for a quantitative analysis of the weekly salaries of all the employees working in this type of business. We have therefore at the beginning established a frequency distribution showing the fluctuations of salary for the period 1945-1949. Our statistical observation shows for a period of five years the salaries at a given time (month of February) during the corresponding year.

Following this, we have compared the arithmetic average of salaries, for each year, in terms of index numbers with the Federal cost of living index. The choice of this Federal index is only justified by the desire to determine an approximation of the real salaries.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SALARIES OF EMPLOYEES OF THE WHOLESALE FOOD TRADE IN QUEBEC DISTRICT, February 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1949 (with the exception of commercial travellers)

Class interval (in dollars per week)	Frequency (number of employees)				
	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
10 — 14.99	54	61	30	9	2
15 — 19.99	50	86	91	70	40
20 — 24.99	270	313	204	65	104
25 — 29.99	96	177	382	390	52
30 — 34.99	39	77	117	208	417
35 — 39.99	15	30	64	84	228
40 — 44.99	8	19	29	35	66
45 — 49.99	5	8	25	28	30
50 — 54.99	4	6	13	17	27
55 — 59.99	1	4	11	7	12
60 — 64.99	1	3	9	9	7
65 — 69.99	1	0	1	4	4
70 — 74.99	0	0	0	0	2
75 — 79.99	0	0	0	0	2
80 — 84.99	0	0	1	0	1
85 — 89.99	1	0	0	0	3
90 — 94.99	0	0	1	0	0
95 — 99.99	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	545	784	978	926	998

TABLE 2: ARITHMETIC AVERAGE AND MEDIAN OF THE SALARIES OF THE WHOLESALE FOOD TRADE OF QUEBEC DISTRICT, February 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1949 (with the exception of commercial travellers)

	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Arithmetic average [1]	$24.15	$25.16	$28.44	$30.64	$34.45
Median [2]	$23.12	$23.90	$27.14	$29.10	$33.94

(1) The arithmetic average has been obtained in multiplying by the number of employees, the rates of salary earned by them, in adding the products thus calculated, and in dividing by the number of employees the total obtained.

(2) The median is defined as being the term which separates into two equal parts the sum of the values of the frequency distribution. It indicates therefore, that half of the employees have a salary above or below its value.

TABLE 3: INDEX NUMBERS OF THE LEVEL OF SALARIES IN THE WHOLESALE FOOD TRADE OF QUEBEC DISTRICT, 1945-49. (1945 = 100)

Year (February)	Nominal salary paid	Cost of living index		Real salary
		1935-39=100	1945=100	
1945	100.0	118.6	100.0	100.0
1946	104.2	119.9	101.1	103.0
1947	117.7	127.8	107.1	109.9
1948	126.9	150.1	126.5	100.3
1949	136.7	159.6 [1]	134.5	101.5

(1) Cost of living index of January 1949.

N.B. This table shows the relation which exists between an annual increase of salaries paid and an annual increase in the cost of living. This table has value only in so much as the comparison is made in terms of increase.