

The State of Employment in April 1921

THE present article is a continuation of the one published in the May-June number of the *International Labour Review* on statistics of employment (1).

CANADA

The table below shows the number of persons on the pay-rolls of some 5,000 firms reporting weekly to the Canadian Employment Service. A comparison is made with the position on 17 January 1920, the percentage in each case being respectively calculated for identical firms.

TABLE I

	No. of firms	employees	
		No.	percent. of staff on 17 Jan. 1920
1921			
Third week of			
Jan.	5,245	616,983	88.6
Feb.	5,276	616,065	88.5
March	5,151	599,236	86.5
Apr.	5,321	609,946	85.9

During the four weeks from 26 March to 16 April the reports show a net decline in employment of 8,158 persons, the aggregate decline of 19,479 in the first two weeks being offset by a rise of 11,321 in the latter two weeks.

Lumber and its products reported additions to staff during all four weeks, largely a seasonal trend due to the re-opening of sawmills. Increases were recorded in telephones, local transportation, tobacco, fish canning and packing, and water transportation. Losses were sustained throughout the period by the textile, coal-mining, railway transportation, and rubber product groups.

GERMANY

The returns of the sickness insurance funds show a further increase in the number of insured persons. The membership of the 6,731 funds, for which returns were published for 1 May

(1) *Inter. Lab. Rev.*, Vol. II, Nos. 2-3, p. 52.

1921, was 13,246,929 as against 12,919,834 on 1 April, an increase of 2.5%. As other statistics, such as trade union returns⁽²⁾, dealing with the state of the labour market, indicate a decrease of employment, these figures should be regarded with caution. It should be remembered that changes in the state of employment are not immediately reflected in the insurance returns.

The above figures do not include sick persons unable to work, nor unemployed persons. Grouped according to the class of fund, the following table results.

TABLE II

Class of fund	Funds	Men		Women	
	No.	No.	percent. incr. (+) or decr. (—) on previous month	No.	percent. incr. (+) or decr. (—) on previous month
Urban	2,030	4,936,131	+ 3.9	3,274,484	+ 1.9
Rural	374	801,541	+ 1.9	827,349	+ 5.1
Factory	3,563	2,272,605	+ 0.6	533,885	+ 1.4
Guild	635	186,757	+ 5.0	61,467	+ 1.3
Mining	129	346,448	— 1.1	6,262	— 0.3
Total	6,731	8,543,482	+ 2.6	4,703,447	+ 2.4

The membership of the 2,404 urban and rural funds, including persons entitled to insurance and sick persons, is distributed as follows:—

TABLE III

	Membership on 1 May		percent. increase on previous month.	
	men	women	men	women
Agriculture and forestry	1,199,347	994,088	1.9	5.6
Domestic service	50,531	822,894	0.8	1.2
Casual work	38,627	57,142	1.7	0.4
Home work	57,132	122,205	4.6	3.5
Other occupations (chiefly industrial)	4,915,240	3,162,554	3.5	1.3

From the above two tables it would appear that the chief increase in employment apart from homework has been among women in agriculture and men in industry.

A classification of the returns of the factory sickness insurance funds by industry shows the following results, the sick and unemployed being excluded.

(2) See table, p. 38.

TABLE IV

	No. of funds	Membership on 1 May		Percent. incr. (+) or decr. (—) on previous month			
				1 May compar- ed with 1 April		1 Apr. compar- ed with 1 Mar.	
		men	women	men	women	men	women
Agriculture, forestry, gardening	96	13,695	7,945	+ 1.2	+ 10.1	— 0.1	+ 16.7
Metals and engineering	876	804,295	76,155	+ 1.0	— 0.7	+ 0.5	— 0.6
Electrical industry	25	69,188	30,036	— 0.7	— 3.8	— 0.1	— 0.9
Chemicals	122	101,637	14,678	— 1.4	+ 0.4	+ 5.6	+ 4.0
Textiles	823	128,016	158,994	+ 2.0	+ 1.0	+ 0.8	— 0.2
Wood working	103	17,876	3,616	+ 1.2	+ 4.2	— 0.8	— 2.9
Foodstuffs	306	45,938	39,929	— 0.3	+ 2.6	— 1.4	+ 1.3
Clothing	76	10,887	12,435	+ 1.7	+ 1.7	— 0.1	+ 1.8
Building	171	71,906	2,286	+ 4.9	+ 3.8	+ 4.4	+ 10.0

The chief improvement continues to be found in the building trade and among women in agriculture, but the increase in employment experienced during the previous month in the chemical industry was not continued. The textile, wood working, and clothing industries all show a slight rise, while employment in the electrical industry continues to decline.

UNITED KINGDOM

Employment was still further reduced during the month of April owing to the national coal dispute, particularly in the coal-using industries, and in some cases, such as the manufacture of pig-iron, tin-plate, and pottery, it ceased almost entirely. The state of employment according to the returns of employers is compared in the tables below with the position a month ago and a year ago.

TABLE V
SUMMARY OF EMPLOYERS' RETURNS
(a) *Certain Mining and Metal Trades*

	Workers included in the returns for April 1921	April 1921	Incr. (+) or decr. (—) as compared with a	
			month ago	year ago
Iron mining	*	days worked per week by mines *	days	days
Shale „			—	—
	3, 095	6.00	—	—
Pig-iron	—	Furnaces in blast 11	No. —100	No. —262
Tinplate and steel sheet.	—	Mills working 35	—101	—464
Iron and steel	42,390	Shifts worked (one week) 209,067	Per cent. —49.2	Per cent. —69.4

* Owing to the dispute in the coal mining industry almost all the iron mines were closed.

(b) Other Trades

	Number of workers			Total wages paid to all workers ⁽¹⁾		
	week ended 23 Apr. 1921	incr. (+) or decr. (—) on a		week ended Apr. 23 1921	incr. (+) or decr. (—) on a	
		month ago	year ago		month ago	year ago
Textiles:		per cent.	per cent.	£	per cent.	per cent.
Cotton	67,333	—11.0	—35.8	132,076	— 6.7	—47.3
Woollen	13,779	—14.3	—27.3	25,277	—22.0	—48.4
Worsted	29,237	— 6.1	—14.7	48,650	—17.6	—39.0
Linen	15,205	—23.8	—53.8	20,713	—24.1	—59.5
Jute	6,456	—18.7	—28.4	8,112	—18.3	—55.3
Hosiery	12,873	— 5.3	—31.7	21,363	— 7.8	—44.5
Lace	4,515	—11.3	—43.2	7,266	—17.2	—59.5
Other tex- tiles	13,297	— 3.6	— 6.6	23,274	—19.0	—21.2
Bleaching, etc.	20,538	— 7.8	—19.4	52,111	—13.0	—42.9
Total tex- tiles	183,233	—10.8	—31.3	338,842	—13.3	—45.9
Boot and shoe	50,182	— 1.1	—18.1	114,059	+ 3.1	—29.7
Shirt and collar	11,800	— 6.1	—15.4	15,432	—10.5	—29.8
Ready- made tailoring	19,118	— 1.6	24.7	30,849	— 6.7	—35.4
Paper, printing and book- binding	27,072	— 4.9	—11.4	79,519	— 6.9	—13.1
Pottery	8,110	—48.8	—47.9	17,067	—56.7	—51.6
Glass	6,656	—24.0	—43.2	20,019	—29.8	—44.8
Brick	5,066	—24.3	—19.2	17,326	—25.3	—11.1
Cement	9,462	—13.9	+ 0.5	36,811	—21.0	+12.7
Food pre- paration	55,959	— 1.0	— 9.7	138,259	— 5.7	— 8.1
Grand total	376,658	— 9.4	—25.1	808,183	—2.3	—33.9

(1) Comparison of earnings is affected by changes in rates of wages.

UNITED STATES

The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes reports concerning the volume of employment in April 1921 from over 800 representative firms in 13 manufacturing industries and in bituminous coal mining, employing in all about 560,000 persons. Tables VI and VII below give a comparison of the figures with those of a year ago and a month ago.

TABLE VI

	Establish- ment report- ing for April 1920 and 1921	Period of pay- roll	Number on pay-roll in April		Per cent. of incr. (+) or decr. (-)	Amount of pay-roll in April		Per cent. of incr. (+) or decr. (-)
			1920	1921		1920	1921	
Iron and steel	113	½ mon.	189,170	120,641	-36.2	\$ 13,870,483	\$ 6,406,764	-53.8
Automobiles	47	1 wk.	147,582	85,802	-41.9	4,936,309	2,716,208	-45.0
Car-building and repair- ing	59	½ mon.	62,071	43,438	-30.0	3,899,467	2,895,972	-25.7
Cotton mfg.	58	1 wk.	58,201	57,968	-0.4	1,229,967	1,000,340	-18.7
Cotton finish- ing	16	"	12,564	11,728	-6.7	296,494	261,280	-11.9
Hosiery and underwear	62	"	34,106	23,137	-32.2	707,266	381,392	-46.1
Woollen	52	"	52,290	47,506	-9.1	1,320,274	1,075,626	-18.5
Silk	45	2 wks.	20,036	17,985	-10.2	972,293	819,231	-15.7
Men's clothing	47	1 wk.	36,524	28,400	-22.2	1,278,315	929,882	-27.3
Leather	34	"	17,398	10,230	-40.9	458,804	238,275	-48.1
Boots and shoes	86	"	72,962	56,171	-23.0	1,801,826	1,311,456	-27.2
Paper making	56	"	31,362	23,702	-24.4	849,170	586,233	-31.0
Cigars	56	"	17,681	16,341	-7.6	362,493	305,075	-15.8
Coal (bitumin- ous)	106	½ mon.	24,714	22,478	-9.0	1,657,268	1,276,620	-23.0

Comparing the figures of April 1921 with those for identical establishments of April 1920, it appears that in all industries there were decreases in the number of persons employed. The largest decreases, 41.9 per cent. and 40.9 per cent., are shown in automobiles and leather. Iron and steel shows a decrease of 36.2 per cent., and hosiery and underwear a decrease of 32.2 per cent. The smallest decrease, 0.4 per cent., appears in cotton manufacturing. All fourteen industries show decreases in the total amount of the pay-roll for April 1921, as compared with April 1920. The most important percentage decrease, 53.8, is shown in iron and steel. Respective decreases of 48.1 per cent., 46.1 per cent., and 45 per cent., appear in the leather, hosiery and underwear, and the automobile industries. On the other hand, a comparison of the returns for the month of April with those for the previous month shows an increase in employment in eight industries out of the fourteen.

The largest increases in the number of persons on the pay-roll are 25.5 per cent. in automobiles and 22.3 in the woollen industry. Among the industries that show decreases may be noted car-building and repairing, 12.3 per cent.; paper making, 11.4 per cent.; and the leather industry, 11.3 per cent. In comparing April with March of this year seven industries show an increase in the amount of the pay-roll, and seven show a decrease. The most important increases are 55.7 per cent. in automobiles and 23.4 per cent. in the woollen industry. The chief decreases were recorded in the iron and steel industry, 20.4 per cent., and in bituminous coal mining, 15.9 per cent.

TABLE VII

	Establish. report- ing for March and April 1921	Period of pay- roll	Number on pay-roll in		Per cent. of incr. (+) or decr. (-)	Amount of pay-roll in		Per cent. of incr. (+) or decr. (-)
			March 1921	April 1921		March 1921	April 1921	
						\$	\$	
Iron and steel	112	½ mon.	131,965	119,165	- 9.7	8,016,149	6,384,265	-20.4
Automobiles	47	1 wk.	68,367	85,802	+25.5	1,744,588	2,716,208	+55.7
Car-building and repairing	60	½ mon.	51,479	45,150	-12.3	3,418,414	3,032,022	-11.3
Cotton mfg.	57	1 wk.	57,003	56,508	- 0.9	988,568	980,065	- 0.9
Cotton finish- ing	15	"	11,148	11,333	+ 1.7	245,729	251,749	+ 2.4
Hosiery and underwear	61	"	22,891	24,642	+ 7.6	378,621	407,502	+ 7.6
Woollen	52	"	38,831	47,506	+22.3	871,666	1,075,626	+23.4
Silk	45	2 wk.	16,998	17,881	+ 5.2	773,411	816,525	+ 5.6
Men's clothing	51	1 wk.	26,727	28,603	+ 7.0	867,651	937,023	+ 8.1
Leather	35	"	10,555	9,365	-11.3	225,680	209,892	- 7.0
Roots and shoes	85	"	55,590	56,042	+ 0.8	1,324,674	1,305,620	- 1.4
Paper making	59	"	27,670	24,512	-11.4	686,084	609,778	-11.1
Cigars	58	"	15,738	16,612	+ 5.6	303,816	309,461	+ 1.8
Coal (bitumin- ous)	56	½ mon.	24,319	21,810	- 0.3	1,471,413	1,237,713	-15.9

Returns of the state of employment in the United States are also published by the Employment Service of the Department of Labor. These are obtained from 1,424 representative firms employing as a rule more than 500 workers and situated in 65 principal industrial centres. The industries are classified under 14 heads. The following table shows the position at the end of April 1921, as compared with that at the end of the previous month and at the end of January 1921.

TABLE VIII

	Number on pay-roll			Perc. incr. (+) decr. (-) in April compared with	
	Jan. 31	March 31	April 30		
				March	Jan.
Food and kindred products	137,444	129,688	125,725	- 3.1	- 8.5
Textiles and their products	223,705	238,542	247,137	+ 3.6	+10.5
Iron, steel and their prod.	443,754	383,794	353,739	- 7.8	-20.3
Lumber and its manufac- ture	24,018	24,599	23,496	- 4.5	- 2.2
Leather and finished leather products	39,385	43,185	45,236	+ 4.7	+14.8
Paper and printing	52,865	50,371	49,693	- 1.3	- 6.0
Liquors and beverages	1,747	1,654	1,660	+ 0.3	- 5.0
Chemicals and allied products	84,803	78,116	76,291	- 2.3	-10.4
Stone, clay, and glass pro- ducts	15,102	14,378	13,921	- 3.2	- 7.8
Metals and metal products other than iron and steel	79,664	76,282	74,574	- 2.2	- 6.4
Tobacco manufactures	28,279	30,176	27,980	- 7.3	- 1.0
Vehicles for land transpor- tation	93,852	142,878	174,864	+22.3	+86.3
Railroad repair shops	63,118	57,584	53,616	- 6.9	-15.1
Miscellaneous industries	340,398	316,539	312,817	- 1.2	- 8.1
Total	1,628,134	1,587,786	1,580,749	- 0.4	- 2.9

The comparison shows a very marked increase in employment in the manufacture of "vehicles for land transportation", 22.3 % since the previous month and 86.3 % since January. Increases have also been recorded in the leather and textile industries. The chief decreases were in the iron and steel industry, 20.3 % since January, railroad repair shops, 15.1 %, and the chemical industry, 10.4 %.

Yet another survey of employment in selected undertakings in the United States has been undertaken by the Federal Reserve Board. The enquiry covers establishments reporting 1,303,792 employees on the pay-roll on the date nearest 1 April 1921, and the results are published in the *Federal Reserve Bulletin* for May. In every district decreases in the number employed as compared with the preceding year were recorded. The total number on the date nearest 1 April 1920 was 1,737,717, so that the decrease during the year was 25 %. The decrease in the total amount of the pay-roll was from \$52,286,463 to \$36,726,380, or 29.8 %. The following table gives the returns classified according to industry.

TABLE IX

	Number of employees on pay-roll			Amount of pay-roll		
	1920 Apr.	1921 Apr.	per cent. incr. (+) dec. (—)	1920 Apr.	1921 Apr.	per cent. incr. (+) dec. (—)
Textiles :				\$	\$	
Cotton	108,770	88,884	—18.2	2,699,798	1,819,749	—32.6
Wool	26,727	23,784	—11.0	772,745	609,972	—21.1
Silk	13,026	11,683	—10.4	317,697	268,117	—15.6
Clothing	43,208	33,417	—22.6	1,462,219	975,287	—33.4
Boots and shoes	59,103	45,950	—22.3	1,644,093	1,248,072	—24.1
Lumber	20,870	15,063	—27.8	638,977	371,381	—41.9
Building materials	21,052	14,028	—33.4	697,185	416,665	—40.2
» construction	21,305	8,456	—60.4	471,246	211,481	—55.1
Paper	26,889	24,261	—9.8	705,259	550,120	—22.0
Meat packing	83,166	64,532	—22.4	2,280,350	1,774,035	—22.2
Iron and steel	168,751	98,785	—41.5	6,019,819	2,714,773	—54.9
Automobiles	84,845	38,027	—55.2	3,085,754	1,135,616	—63.2
Farm machinery	21,586	13,555	—37.2	858,958	477,969	—44.4
Electrical goods	50,588	37,164	—26.5	1,557,510	1,062,521	—31.7
Copper	26,980	16,640	—38.3	888,378	453,047	—49.0
Oil	22,643	23,331	+ 3.0	803,384	975,518	+21.5
Rubber	57,711	20,798	—64.0	1,646,346	355,982	—78.4
Printing	14,202	12,590	—11.4	479,738	441,762	—7.9
Chemicals	12,813	9,200	—28.2	465,055	238,081	—48.8
Shipbuilding	32,453	28,564	—12.0	1,005,161	1,038,729	+3.3
Tobacco manu- facture	29,849	24,282	—18.6	531,629	313,789	—41.0
Public utilities	320,820	300,360	—6.4	10,551,038	10,646,294	+ 0.9

Apart from an increase in the case of oil, there were reductions in the number of employees in all industries, ranging from 6.4 % in public utility services to 64 % in the rubber industry. The decreases in building construction (60.4 %), in the automobile industry (55.2 %), and in the iron and steel industry (41.5 %) were also very heavy. The percentage reductions in aggregate pay-rolls were in most cases even larger than those in numbers employed. Increases were only shown in the oil industry (21.5 %) and in shipbuilding (3.3 %).

The considerable discrepancies that may be noted as between these three sets of returns can to a large extent be accounted for by differences in the method of classifying the industries.

