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THE FEBRUARY EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

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According to reports received, compiled and tabulated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics employment at the beginning of February showed considerable revival from the contractions recorded at the commencement of January, when losses incidental to the holiday and mid-winter inventory period, supplementing seasonal declines, had reduced activity to a marked degree. The reaction was somewhat more pronounced than that registered at the beginning of February of last year and considerably more so than at the same period in 1921. Statements for the month under review were compiled from 6,253 employers of labour whose pay-rolls aggregated 733,063 persons as compared with 707,859 at the commencement of January. This increase of over 25,000 workers caused the index number to gain slightly over 3 points, standing at 89.5 as compared with 86.3 on January 1 and with 78.9 on February 1, 1922. Practically all the recovery was recorded in the manufacturing industries, (notably in iron and steel) but logging and coal mining also afforded more employment. Activity in transportation and construction continued to decline, although the shrinkage was on a rather smaller scale than in the preceding month. Retail stores registered the usual large reductions in salesforce following the holiday season and wholesale houses were not so busy. The tables on page 3 which give the index numbers of employment by months for 1921, 1922 and to the beginning of February, 1923, as well as by provinces, cities and industries for the period under review as compared with the beginning of January, 1923 and with February 1922 and 1921, show the general situation to be considerably more favorable than in the corresponding month of last year. In several cases moreover the level of employment was higher than at the beginning of February, 1921.

Employment increased in all provinces except the Maritime district where considerable losses in steel works caused a decline. The largest gains occurred in Ontario, in which province approximately 15,000 persons were added to the staffs of the concerns reporting. The expansion in that province and in Quebec, which was noteworthy also, was mainly due to revival of activity in the manufacturing division, while construction and transportation continued to show curtailment. In the Prairie district the re-opening of the railway car shops caused substantial increases in employment in the iron and steel industry which, however, were partly offset by continued contractions in transportation, construction and also in trade. The sawmilling and vehicle industries in British Columbia reported moderate improvement.

An analysis of the returns by cities shows that in Montreal there was considerable recovery from the losses reported at the beginning of January. This was largely due to the resumption of activity in the locomotive shops and in tobacco, rubber, cotton, garment, tin, brass, bronze and copper factories. On the other hand merchants and building contractors registered smaller payrolls. In Toronto also the trend of employment was favorable; lead, tin, box, printing, publishing, rubber, slaughtering, meatpacking, garment and millinery concerns reported increased activity, but trade and construction were slacker. In Ottawa, employment declined to some extent, improvement in sawmills, gas and textile concerns being insufficient

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to counterbalance declines in trade and construction. A favorable reaction was indicated in Hamilton, where the volume of employment afforded in hosiery and knitting mills, in wood-working, agricultural implement, structural iron and steel, tobacco and electrical apparatus factories showed an increase. In that city retail stores employed much smaller pay-rolls than at the beginning of January and garment concerns were not so busy. The most important change in Winnipeg, where the general tendency was unfavorable, occurred in the trade group, from which considerable numbers of workers were released. Dairies and electric current works recorded reduced activity, while telephone operation and building construction also showed contractions. On the other hand, confectionery manufacturers were busier. In Vancouver, tin can and gas concerns reported marked recovery, but the gains indicated in those industries were not large enough to offset the losses in building construction, in shipping and stevedoring and in tobacco works.

As mentioned above, the level of employment in manufacturing was considerably higher than at the close of January especially in iron and steel. Railway car, locomotive, automobile, general plant machinery, steel ship building and repairing, heating appliance, iron and steel fabrication and iron pipe shops reported substantially larger working forces. Improvement was also registered in cloth, knitting, garment, boot, shoe, furniture, container and carriage factories, in sawmills, lead, tin, zinc and copper works, tobacco, biscuit, paper, electrical appliance, rubber tire and footwear works. Activity in abattoirs and in meat packing, fur, clay, glass, stone and electric current concerns, on the other hand, was on a lower level. Employment in logging camps continued to increase, particularly in Quebec. Coal mining in the Maritime and prairie provinces reported increases, while asbestos and gypsum mines in Quebec and Nova Scotia, respectively, were decidedly slacker. Continued curtailment of operations was indicated by the operation departments of the railways, all provinces except the Maritimes and British Columbia sharing in the contraction. Further reductions in payroll were reported in the shipping and stevedoring group, especially on the Pacific coast. Building and highway construction continued to decline largely. Seasonal losses of a general character were recorded in trade, especially in the retail division.

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Note: Base period, January 17, 1920 equals 100.

The relative weight represents the proportion of employees in the indicated district or industry to the total number of employees reported in all districts and industries for the period under review.

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TABLE 1.

Index Numbers of Employment in Canada by Months.

	1923	1922	1921
January 1.....	86.3	77.9	87.7
February 1.....	89.5	78.9	90.1
March 1.....		81.9	88.0
April 1.....		80.6	84.1
May 1.....		83.3	84.1
June 1.....		89.2	86.6
July 1.....		91.1	87.5
August 1.....		93.1	88.9
September 1.....		93.7	88.7
October 1.....		94.6	90.2
November 1.....		95.8	90.2
December 1.....		95.1	87.2

TABLE II.

Index Numbers of Employment by Provinces.

District	Relative Weight	Feb. 1 1923	Jan. 1 1923	Feb. 1 1922	Feb. 1 1921
Maritime Provinces.....	9.0	93.3	90.8	76.6	96.3
Quebec and Ontario.....	69.7	89.1	84.8	77.6	89.0
Prairie Provinces.....	13.4	91.6	90.0	83.0	93.7
British Columbia.....	7.9	88.4	88.3	84.3	87.2
CANADA.....	100	89.5	86.3	78.9	90.1

TABLE III.

Index Numbers of Employment by Cities

City	Relative Weight	Feb. 1 1923	Jan. 1 1923	Feb. 1 1922	Feb. 1 1921
Montreal.....	14.0	86.2		79.8	73.6
Toronto.....	14.2	88.5		84.7	81.8
Ottawa.....	1.7	95.7		94.4	
Hamilton.....	3.7	86.0		81.5	
Winnipeg.....	3.8	89.0		92.6	84.1
Vancouver.....	2.7	85.8		87.7	88.7

TABLE IV.

Index Numbers of Employment by Industries.

Industry	Relative Weight	Feb. 1 1923	Jan. 1 1923	Feb. 1 1922	Feb. 1 1921
Manufacturing	57.0	85.0	78.1	73.0	84.8
Logging.....	4.8	95.1	87.0	61.5	94.3
Mining.....	6.3	101.3	100.8	89.7	95.8
Communication.....	2.8	96.5	97.4	95.7	104.6
Transportation.....	13.9	101.5	104.8	97.0	101.3
Construction & Maintenance	6.0	86.0	96.0	79.8	100.1
Services.....	1.6	92.4	92.3	91.7	94.2
Trade.....	7.6	93.7	98.2	90.3	92.5
ALL INDUSTRIES..	100	89.5	86.3	78.9	90.1

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