

highly industrialized Middle Atlantic area reported the smallest decrease—approximately 8 percent.

At the close of November 5.6 million active job seekers were registered at the public employment offices, 3 percent more than in October. This is the first increase in 1939 in the active files and follows an almost uninterrupted decline from the level of 8.1 million reported in August 1938. Increases in the number of job seekers registered with public employment offices were reported in 31 States. Of the total registrants, 4.2 million were men and 1.4 million were women. New applications for work totaled 539,000, and decreased 1 percent from October, despite increases in 29 States.

Total funds available for benefits at the close of November aggregated more than \$1.5 billion, a gain of 5 percent over October. The largest relative increases, all in excess of 10 percent, occurred in Alaska, Iowa, and Pennsylvania. Available funds for benefits increased 5.0 percent or more in 12 other States. Reductions were reported by Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Oregon, and Rhode Island; the largest decline, of 2.5 percent, occurred in Michigan. Michigan had approximately 76 percent of its original reserve available for benefits at the close of November; this was the only State whose funds were less than at the time payments of benefits began. For the first time since February 1938, available funds in Maine approximated the amount available when benefits first became payable. On the other hand, funds available for benefits in the District of Columbia were about 2½ times as large as those originally on hand. Reserves have more than doubled since the initiation of benefit payments in 5 other States—California, Louisiana, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

Benefit payments charged to State accounts for the current year, through November, amounted to \$398 million, representing 51 cents paid out for each dollar of contributions received during the year. Idaho was the only State in which benefits have exceeded contributions for this year. Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming were the only other States to pay more than 75 cents for each dollar collected during 1939. The total of \$794 million charged since benefits first were payable represents an average of 63 cents for each dollar collected since the initiation of benefit payments in the several States.

Industrial and Occupational Classifications of Third-Quarter Placements

Placements made by the public employment office system during the third quarter of 1939 are of particular interest not only because of the general marked increase in volume but also because this was the first period of placement operations since benefits were being paid in all States. It was expected that the unemployment compensation program would widen the opportunities of the public employment offices for placement work, both from the standpoint of increased contact with employers and from the fact that a greater number of highly employable applicants would be brought into the offices.

During the third quarter of 1939 the public employment offices made nearly a million complete placements, a gain of one-quarter over the volume of placements in the same months of 1938. It is notable that this gain was achieved despite a drop in public placements, in which the opportunities for placement were restricted by limitations of public appropriations. Placements with private employers, which numbered more than three-quarters of a million, were over one-third higher than in the corresponding 1938 period and were higher than for any previous 3-month

Table 9.—All placements of men and women made by public employment services, by major industrial groups, July–September 1939

Industrial group	Men			Women		
	Number	Percentage distribution	Percentage change from July–September 1938	Number	Percentage distribution	Percentage change from July–September 1938
Total.....	636,497	100.0	+17.4	337,947	100.0	+42.1
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	120,185	18.0	+32.5	16,684	4.9	+115.9
Extraction of minerals.....	5,587	.9	+4.6	83	(¹)	+7.8
Building and construction, total.....	233,435	36.7	+5.4	382	.1	+4.7
Private.....	40,937	6.5	+33.2	204	.1	+49.2
Public.....	192,498	30.2	+1.9	88	(¹)	-47.6
Manufacturing.....	85,914	13.5	+30.4	63,980	18.9	+34.1
Professional, commercial, and mechanical services.....	28,311	4.4	+21.0	14,965	4.4	+43.0
Distribution.....	43,410	6.8	+51.0	40,680	12.1	+64.1
Personal service, hotels, restaurants, etc.....	79,001	12.5	+39.3	107,899	58.6	+38.5
Governmental service.....	16,951	2.7	+33.5	1,790	.5	+10.2
Transportation, communication, and public utilities.....	14,097	2.2	+17.6	839	.3	+81.2
Work-relief projects.....	8,695	1.4	-64.5	634	.2	-60.4
Unspecified.....	11	(¹)	-65.6	11	(¹)	-81.7

¹ Less than 0.1 percent.

Table 10.—Private placements of men and women made by public employment services, by major occupational groups, July–September 1939

Occupational group	Men			Women		
	Number	Percentage distribution	Percentage change from July–September 1938	Number	Percentage distribution	Percentage change from July–September 1938
Total	418,353	100.0	+33.2	335,435	100.0	+43.1
Professional and kindred workers	5,282	1.3	+38.3	2,461	.8	+41.1
Salespersons	10,138	4.6	+58.3	21,768	7.4	+47.3
Clerical workers	10,298	2.5	+53.4	22,379	6.7	+68.1
Service workers	60,670	16.6	+38.0	201,015	59.9	+38.6
Craftsmen	48,220	11.5	+38.4	7,154	2.1	+34.6
Production workers	57,091	13.9	+16.5	46,351	13.8	+39.3
Physical-labor workers	207,270	49.5	+32.9	31,171	9.3	+76.2
Unspecified	475	.1	+1.4	106	0	-61.2

period in the history of the public employment system. Although the gain in private placements represents principally expanding activity on the part of the employment offices during a period of increasing general employment, it also reflects a trend which has been in evidence for several years.

During the early years of the Nation-wide public employment office system, the major portion of placements was made in public employment; this category included jobs filled on various types of work projects as well as placements with regular government agencies—Federal, State, and local. Not until the fiscal year ended June 30, 1937, did the volume of private placements approximate that with public units. In each year since that time private placements have accounted for an increasingly larger portion of the total number of jobs filled. In the third quarter of this year private placements were more than 77 percent of all complete placements; in the same 3 months of 1938 they were 70 percent.

The relative gains in the total number of placements of women were much larger than for men. Placements of men, which numbered 636,497 in the July–September quarter of 1939, were slightly less than one-fifth above the level of the same quarter a year earlier, while those of women were over two-fifths higher. In private jobs, placements of men were one-third above those of the previous year, while those for women were two-fifths higher. As a result, men accounted for but 65 percent of the placement total in the 1939

period, compared to some 70 percent of the total a year earlier. In jobs with private employers, however, the relative proportion of men placed declined only slightly and in actual volume increased greatly.

A widening of the scope of employment service facilities is indicated by an expansion in the industrial groups in which placements were made as well as by the increased volume. During the third quarter of 1939 placements were less heavily concentrated in a few groups, and the increasing activity of the public employment offices in the important fields of manufacturing and distribution (wholesale and retail trade) was reflected in the expanded placements of male applicants. Total placements of men in the distribution field were over 50 percent larger in the 1939 quarter than one year earlier, while in manufacturing a gain of nearly one-third was reported.

As in the past, the largest number of placements of men was in the building and construction industry. However, although placements in the private building and construction section of the industry rose one-third in volume over the same period in 1938, total jobs filled in the industry dropped slightly in relative proportion, because of the lack of increase in public building and construction. Of the total placements in the industry, about four-fifths were on public jobs, one-fifth on private.

The second largest field in which men were placed was agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Complete placements of this type accounted for nearly one-fifth of all placements of men; the rate of increase from the level of the preceding year in the number of jobs filled in such work was nearly double the average increase in placements of men. Moreover, in addition to the complete placements, a large number of supplemental farm placements were made. These include instances in which the offices refer workers to employers but do not execute all formal steps of registration and selection. The public employment system gives particular attention to the problems of agricultural labor, and in 18 States the regular offices are assisted by special farm-placement facilities.

The third largest number of male placements was in the field of manufacturing, followed closely by placements in the service industries. These four leading industrial groups accounted for some four-fifths of all placements during the quarter,

although the significant gains in the distribution and the professional and miscellaneous commercial and mechanical fields—the fifth and sixth groups in order of size—brought the aggregate of such placements to nearly one-eighth of the total for all placements of men.

Increased diversification in placements of women also occurred, although such placements are much more highly concentrated than those for men. More than half of all placements of women were in the field of personal service, almost one-fifth in the field of manufacturing, and one-eighth in distribution. These three groups together accounted for 90 percent of the placements of women in the third quarter of 1939. Although relatively small in total volume, the largest relative gains in the placements of women occurred in the fields of agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and in transportation and communication, while significant increases occurred in the field of distribution. Placements in personal-service jobs, however, fell slightly in relative importance; gains in this field were less than the average gain for all placements of women.

In the occupational groups, also, the trend toward diversity of placements was evident for men and to a somewhat lesser degree for women. Although during the third quarter of both 1938 and 1939 nearly half of the placements of men were in physical-labor jobs, there was a significant

increase in the proportion of placements in white-collar occupations in the latter year. In the 1939 quarter, private placements in sales and clerical jobs were more than 50 percent above the level of a year earlier, and those in professional callings nearly 40 percent. The three groups together accounted for 8.4 percent of all private placements of men, whereas one year earlier they aggregated 7.2 percent of such placements. Placements of men in skilled-craft jobs increased significantly, as did those in service occupations, while placements in semiskilled occupations, although likewise increasing in number, accounted for a smaller proportion of private jobs filled.

Similar trends were apparent in somewhat lesser degree for women. Here, although the number of placements in all occupational groups increased greatly, the proportion of private placements in service occupations declined slightly notwithstanding the large increase in actual number, while the proportion of white-collar jobs increased in relative importance. Unlike the experience for men, however, placements of women in unskilled physical-labor jobs gained sharply both in relative importance and in volume. Placements of women in skilled and semiskilled production jobs, on the other hand, declined slightly in relative proportion, although they were more than one-third above 1938 in actual volume.

RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE*

In the 5 weeks ended December 1, the regional offices of the Railroad Retirement Board received a total of 102,063 unemployment claims under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. The average number of claims received per week in November was slightly smaller than the weekly average for October and considerably below the weekly average for the first quarter of operations (table 11). The figures week by week, however, clearly show that the decline in claims receipts, which began late in September and continued in October, was reversed in November. The change occurred early in the month. The receipts during the weeks ended November 10 and 17 were somewhat larger than during the 2 preceding weeks. Large increases in the number of claims received

were shown for the weeks ended November 24 and December 1.

The addition to the claims load must have originated, in part, with workers who have become unemployed for the first time since the beginning of railroad unemployment insurance. This inference is based on the large increase in applications for certificate of benefit rights, which are submitted on the first day of unemployment. The average number of applications per week received in November was nearly double the average in October. Receipts of applications were particularly large beginning with the week ended November 10. Since there is a lag of 14 days between the submission of an application and the filing of the first claim, the marked increase in claims receipts in the week ended November 24 is related to the pronounced bulge in the series for applications in the week ended November 10.

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