

# Employment Characteristics of Interstate Workers in Covered Employment in 1938

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IN SPITE OF WIDESPREAD INTEREST in industrial migration and of various efforts to accumulate detailed information on the nature of interstate movements and the characteristics of migrants, knowledge of this problem is still very limited. Current generalizations are necessarily based on numerous sample studies, covering comparatively short periods of time and often varying considerably in their conceptual approaches and their objectives. While the limitations of such studies are obvious, they must continue to serve as the primary source of information on the supply of migratory labor in this country, pending the development of a continuous sample of wage records or a system of periodic enumeration on a Nation-wide scale.<sup>1</sup> The sample studies can perform the additional function of focusing attention on gaps and inadequacies in information and can thus serve as a guide in the formulation of more exhaustive studies.

During 1940 and 1941 an analysis was made of the 1938 wage-record data of approximately 277,000 workers covered by the old-age and survivors insurance program, approximately 1 percent of all the workers with taxable wages under this program. While the major purpose of the study<sup>1</sup> was to estimate the effects of migration on the unemployment compensation rights of workers with wage credits under more than one State system, considerable data on the employment characteristics of migrants working in covered employment was obtained as a byproduct. Since these data not only corroborate the findings of some earlier studies but also add to the existing body of information on migration, it seems desirable to make the material generally available.

For the purposes of the study, workers with taxable wages under the old-age and survivors

insurance program in more than one State during 1938 were designated migrants; workers with taxable wages in one State only were designated nonmigrants. It should be remembered throughout the following discussion that the wage records of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance furnish data on only one segment of the total migrant population, that is, workers with taxable wages under the program. The wage records do not contain information on earnings or employment in agriculture, where a sizable proportion of the total migrant labor force is employed. Nor do they furnish information on earnings in other noncovered employment. Consequently, even for workers who have taxable wages in covered employment, the wage-record data are incomplete in that some covered workers have earnings in noncovered employment of which there is no record. However, since covered interstate workers are a very important element in the total migratory labor force, their wage and employment data provide an important check on current generalizations about migrants and at the same time indicate areas where further study must be done.

While it has been generally accepted that the volume of migration fluctuates considerably with the effective demand for labor, little is known about the diverse effects of the various phases of the business cycle on the interstate movements of migrants. The migrants are a heterogeneous group, containing both casual unskilled workers and highly skilled and regularly employed workers. Some move more or less habitually from State to State; others move only to make fairly permanent changes. Still others, constituting a fairly large group, are transferred from State to State by their employers. There are indications in the data developed in this study that a period in which employment opportunities are curtailed may have a different significance for each of these groups and that consequently the economic composition of the migrant group may vary considerably from year to year.

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<sup>1</sup>See Merriam, Ida C., and Bliss, Elizabeth T., "Effects of Migration on Unemployment Benefit Rights," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (September 1941), pp. 3-11. The basic data of this analysis are contained in the appendix tables of the detailed report, *Unemployment Compensation Rights of Workers Employed in More Than One State*, Bureau Report No. 11, Bureau of Research and Statistics.

It is generally believed that migration is deterred in periods of depression by the almost universal practice of requiring applicants for relief to fulfill certain residence requirements as one of the conditions of eligibility for relief. However, the settlement laws undoubtedly have less effect on the habitual migrant, who has no legal residence, than on more settled workers, who migrate infrequently. Casual and unskilled workers with low earning power typically have slight financial reserves. In periods of expanding business activity when job opportunities are plentiful, they can frequently increase their earnings by migrating. However, when job opportunities are limited and large local reserves of labor exist, such workers, in deciding to migrate, face the risk of exhausting their resources without finding a job. There are indications that this type of worker is less likely to migrate in periods of recession.

On the other hand, the higher paid semiskilled and skilled workers, who are usually more stable geographically than the casual workers, may have an incentive to migrate because of depression lay-offs and dismissals. Such workers more often are able financially to make a move without a definite assurance of a job than are the casual workers. The old-age and survivors insurance data support the hypothesis of the changing composition of the migratory labor force insofar as the covered segment of the group is concerned; further analysis is necessary, however, before conclusions can be reached relating either to the entire migrant group or to covered interstate workers alone.

One of the most interesting facts which emerged from this study was the discovery that, according to an estimate based on the sample, there were more than 400,000 interstate workers in covered employment who worked for only one employer during 1938. This group had distinctive employment characteristics. It seemed probable that many of these workers made their interstate moves in connection with their regular employment, but it was impossible to identify their occupations from the data. Several theories as to the characteristics of the group have been advanced in the study but more research should be done in this area also, particularly since this type of worker is not ordinarily considered in discussions of industrial migration.

An analysis of the quarters of employment

in relation to the taxable wages of the covered migrants and nonmigrants in the 1938 sample revealed a complex relationship between the taxable wages of the two groups which is often concealed in discussions based only on annual-wage data. Since annual wages are a function of wage rates and of length and regularity of employment, variations in the composition and employment characteristics of the migrant and nonmigrant groups from year to year condition the relationship of the summary wage data for the two groups. In some years, such as 1937, the summary figures indicate that the nonmigrants are on the average a higher paid group than the migrants. In other years, such as 1938, the reverse is true. This study indicates that the proportion of workers in each group who are in covered employment during only 1 or 2 quarters may be a very important factor in determining this relationship. However, analysis over a longer time span is necessary to establish this theory. Furthermore, it will be necessary to obtain data on earnings in noncovered employment before anything other than a hypothesis can be advanced.

#### *Extent of Interstate Migration of Covered Workers*

Of the 277,000 workers whose wage records were analyzed, 262,000 had covered employment in only one State during 1938. The remaining 15,000, or 5.5 percent of the total number, had covered employment in two or more States. The great majority of the migrants, 93.8 percent, had taxable earnings in two States, 5.3 percent in three States, and the remaining 0.9 percent in four or more States. The ratio of migrants to nonmigrants in 1938 is smaller than that revealed by an analysis of the 1937 wage-record data, in which migrant wage earners constituted 7 percent of all covered wage earners in that year.<sup>2</sup>

The discrepancy may be explained largely by differences in the definition of a migrant. In the study of 1937 wages, a worker was classified as a migrant if he had been employed during some part of either reporting period of 1937 in a State other than that in which his account number was assigned. Under the terms of this definition, an estimated 800,000 workers who would have been classified in the present study as nonmigrants

<sup>2</sup> U. S. House of Representatives, Select Committee to Investigate Interstate Migration . . . , *Interstate Migration*, H. Rept. 309, 1941, p. 470.

because they worked in the same State during the entire year were classified as migrants because the State in which they were employed in 1937 differed from the State in which their account numbers were issued. Furthermore, since a great many account numbers were issued in November and December of 1936, the period in which movement was studied was slightly longer than the 12-month period used in the analysis of 1938 data. It is also possible that the difference in the proportion reflects a real though slight decline in the migration of covered workers in 1938, caused by a general decline in employment opportunities and a consequent reluctance on the part of industrial workers to exhaust their resources by migrating without definite assurance of finding a job. On the other hand, there may have been no real decline in the volume of migration, and the smaller proportion of covered migrants in 1938 may indicate only a lack of success in finding covered employment in other States.

#### Earnings of Covered Migrants, 1937 and 1938

In several respects the employment experience of the workers employed in more than one State during 1938 differed significantly from that of the workers employed in one State only. In that year the taxable wages of the migrants were higher than those of the nonmigrants as a group. The median annual taxable wage of the migrant group was \$735 as compared with \$660 for the nonmigrants (table 1). Moreover, only 7.6 percent of

the migrants as compared with 17.0 percent of the nonmigrants had taxable wages of less than \$100 during the year (table 2).

In contrast, the analysis of the 1937 data had indicated that the covered migrants were a somewhat lower paid group than the covered nonmigrants. While the average taxable wage of the migrants was slightly higher than that of the nonmigrants, \$895 as compared with \$882, the median wage of the migrants was lower, \$751 as compared with \$770.

The explanation of the differences in the findings of the two studies cannot be discovered by an exact comparison of the taxable wage distributions in 1937 and 1938, because of the dissimilar treatment of a sizable group of workers, resulting from differences in definition. Certain hypotheses, however, can be drawn from the wage distributions.

For comparison with the 1938 data, the wage distribution of the nonmigrants in the 1937 study can be used with most confidence, since the addition to the nonmigrant group of the 800,000 workers classified as migrants would increase the size of the universe by less than 3 percent and since there is no reason to assume that the distribution of the taxable wages of this group differs significantly from that of the workers classified as nonmigrants. As would be expected in a year of recession, in 1938 a larger proportion of nonmigrants earned less than \$1,000 than in 1937. The most notable difference between the wage distribution frequencies of the 2 years was to be

Table 1.—Migrants and nonmigrants, by number of quarters of employment and by amount of taxable wages, and percentage distribution, by quarters of employment, 1938<sup>1</sup>

Taxable wages	Total migrants	Migrants with employment in—				Total nonmigrants	Nonmigrants with employment in—			
		1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters		1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters
Total.....	16, 124	271	2, 052	3, 151	0, 650	261, 626	40, 099	80, 892	87, 115	146, 620
Percentage distribution.....	100.0	1.8	13.0	20.8	63.8	100.0	15.0	14.1	14.2	66.1
Less than \$50.....	550	93	343	88	20	29, 215	22, 094	5, 470	1, 220	416
50-99.....	606	58	202	173	84	15, 308	7, 428	5, 118	1, 895	867
100-199.....	1, 186	68	452	424	242	21, 436	6, 432	8, 085	4, 196	2, 723
200-299.....	1, 148	24	338	410	367	16, 301	2, 311	5, 833	4, 424	3, 783
300-399.....	1, 100	8	218	405	460	14, 433	1, 019	3, 775	4, 209	5, 480
400-499.....	1, 016	3	130	320	554	13, 617	411	2, 431	3, 850	6, 925
500-999.....	4, 167	8	188	885	3, 086	63, 763	478	4, 162	11, 030	48, 093
1,000-1,499.....	2, 542	3	37	220	2, 282	42, 510	64	689	2, 075	38, 782
1,500-1,999.....	1, 425	1	13	91	1, 320	22, 627	42	212	992	21, 381
2,000-2,499.....	626	0	3	27	596	10, 333	27	69	460	9, 768
2,500-2,999.....	307	0	4	9	294	4, 756	17	58	167	4, 524
3,000 or more.....	451	5	34	82	330	7, 227	376	981	1, 692	4, 178
Median annual taxable wage.....	\$734.70	\$84.48	\$182.74	\$408.06	\$972.78	\$660.38	\$45.71	\$191.01	\$445.75	\$1,040.40
Median average quarterly taxable wage <sup>2</sup> .....	183.68	84.48	91.37	136.02	243.20	165.10	45.71	95.61	148.68	260.10

<sup>1</sup> Data based on a sample of approximately 1 percent of wage records of all workers with taxable wages in 1938 under the old-age and survivors insurance program. "Migrants" designates those workers who received taxable wages

in more than 1 State, "nonmigrants" those who received taxable wages in 1 State only.

<sup>2</sup> See table 3, footnote 1.

**Table 2.—Percentage distribution of migrants and nonmigrants, by taxable wages, 1937 and 1938**

Taxable wages	Total <sup>1</sup>		Migrants <sup>2</sup>		Nonmigrants <sup>3</sup>	
	1937	1938	1937	1938 <sup>4</sup>	1937	1938 <sup>4</sup>
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than \$100.....	14.3	16.4	13.1	7.6	14.4	17.0
100-199.....	7.4	8.4	7.0	7.8	7.4	8.2
200-299.....	5.6	6.2	6.1	7.6	5.6	6.2
300-399.....	4.9	5.5	5.7	7.3	4.8	5.5
400-499.....	4.7	5.1	5.0	6.7	4.6	5.2
500-999.....	24.5	24.4	23.7	27.6	24.5	24.4
1,000-1,499.....	18.2	16.6	15.7	16.8	18.4	16.2
1,500-1,999.....	10.6	8.6	9.9	9.4	10.6	8.7
2,000-2,499.....	4.6	4.0	5.2	4.2	4.6	4.0
2,500-2,999.....	2.1	1.9	2.8	2.0	2.1	1.8
3,000 and over.....	3.1	2.9	4.6	3.0	3.0	2.8

<sup>1</sup> Excludes in each year a number of employees holding railroad retirement account numbers and those whose race or sex was unknown. Employees holding railroad account numbers are those who, at the time their account numbers were assigned, were working in railroad employment as defined by the Railroad Retirement Act. The numbers assigned to these employees do not identify the States in which they were assigned, and therefore these employees cannot be differentiated as migrant or nonmigrant. Data for 1937 adjusted for carry-over wage items.

<sup>2</sup> Migrants defined in 1937 as those employees who were employed in some part of the year in States other than those in which their account numbers were assigned; in 1938 as those who received taxable wages in more than 1 State.

<sup>3</sup> Nonmigrants defined in 1937 as those employees who were employed during all of each reporting period in which they received wage credits in the State where their account number was assigned; in 1938, as those whose wages were taxable in 1 State only.

<sup>4</sup> See table 1, footnote 1.

found in the size of the group earning less than \$100; in 1938, it was 2.6 percent larger than in 1937. This difference may be at least partially the result of a sampling error in the 1938 study which is known to have occurred in this interval. It quite certainly reflects also a real difference in earnings distributions in the 2 years. The proportion of workers earning less than \$100 rose from 14.3 percent of the total in 1937 to 16.4 percent in 1938; a corresponding increase in the proportion of nonmigrants in this earnings category seems logical.

Any comparison of the wage-distribution data of the two migrant groups must be undertaken with considerable reservation. If there is anything peculiar about the wage distribution of the 800,000 workers included as migrants in the 1937 data, the 1937 wage distribution may be considerably biased. If it is assumed, however, that the wage distribution of these workers was identical to that of the nonmigrants in 1937, removal of their wages from the migrant tabulation would slightly increase the proportion of migrants in the low income intervals. Such treatment would not basically alter the relationship between the migrant wage distributions for the 2 years.

It will be noted that the most significant differences between the 1938 distribution of

migrants' taxable wages and the unadjusted 1937 distribution occur in the "less than \$100" interval and the \$500-999 interval. In tests of the reliability of the 1938 sample it was found that there were probable minor sampling errors in both of these intervals. It is possible that these errors give a slight upward bias to the 1938 wage distribution. However, the deviations in each case were too small to account entirely for the higher earnings levels of the 1938 migrants.

It seems more probable that there was a real difference between the 2 years in the proportion of migrants earning less than \$100. As indicated above, the proportion of all workers earning less than \$100 increased in 1938. While the proportion of nonmigrants in this earnings category also apparently increased, the proportion of migrants therein seems to have decreased. This fact suggests that curtailed employment opportunities in 1938 may have served as a curb on interstate movements of casual workers, thus lowering the median annual wage of the nonmigrants by increasing the proportion of casual workers in the low earnings group and, conversely, raising the median annual wage of the migrant group. An alternative explanation would be that the casual migrant workers were less successful in finding work when there were local labor reserves created by the recession. Their failure to accumulate wage credits in more than one State, even though they moved from State to State in search of employment, would have resulted in their classification as nonmigrants in the 1938 study. At the same time the depressed economic conditions may have stimulated the migration of semiskilled and skilled workers. Workers who in 1937 were employed in only one State may have become unemployed in 1938 and may have been forced to move into another State to find employment. Such migrants would be expected to have greater success in finding covered employment than the casual workers, and an increase in the proportion of these workers would tend to raise the median annual wage of the migrant group. Whatever the reason for the changes in the proportions of workers in the low earnings interval, it seems clear that these changes are a factor of some importance in the explanation of the differences of the migrants' taxable wage levels between 1937 and 1938 and of the difference in the relationship of their earnings to those of the nonmigrants.

### Median Average Quarterly Wages, 1938

Substantially fewer migrants than nonmigrants had taxable wages in only 1 quarter of 1938—1.8 percent as compared with 15.6 percent—and more had taxable wages in each of the 4 quarters—63.8 percent as compared with 56.1 percent (table 1). As would be expected, there was a close correlation between the number of quarters of employment and the amounts of earnings—both annual and average quarterly earnings—for both migrants and nonmigrants. When workers with taxable wages in 4 quarters were arrayed by the size of their average quarterly wages, the earnings in the first decile of the array were higher than those in the first decile of a similar array of workers with taxable wages in 3 quarters only (chart 1). This relationship obtained throughout all other deciles of the two arrays. Similarly the average quarterly earnings of workers with wage credits in 3 quarters were higher in all deciles than those of individuals with wage credits in 1 or 2 quarters. In other words, the rate of earnings was in general higher as a worker was employed more steadily throughout the year.

At all but one of the decile points of the frequency distribution, the average quarterly wages of the nonmigrants employed in 2 or more quarters were higher than those of the migrants with the same number of quarters of employment. The situation was reversed, however, for the migrants and nonmigrants with covered employment in 1 quarter only. The average quarterly earnings of the nonmigrants were considerably lower than those of the migrants at all decile points of this frequency distribution.

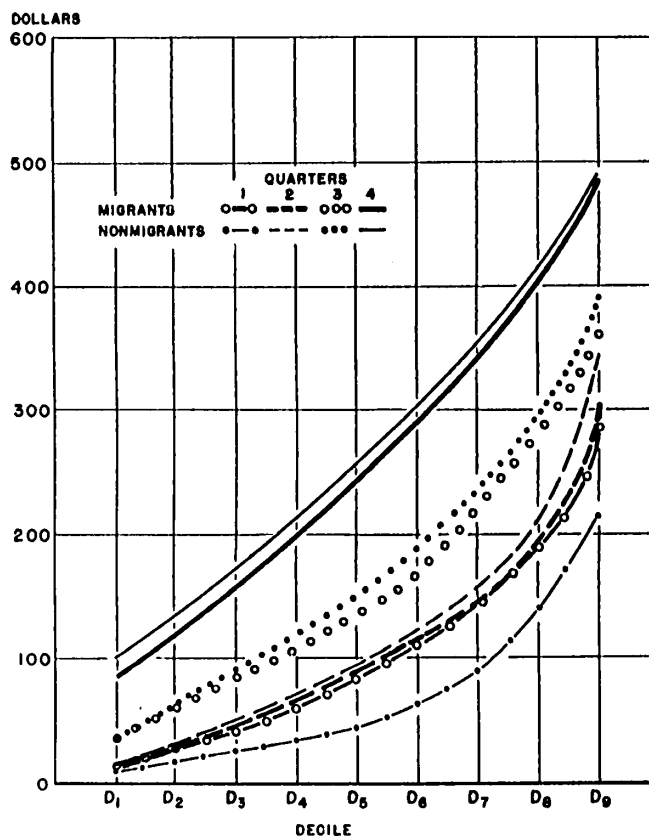
Table 3.—Median average quarterly taxable wages of migrants and nonmigrants, by number of employers and number of quarters with taxable wages, 1938

Number of employers	Median average quarterly wage of migrants with taxable wages in—				Median average quarterly wage of nonmigrants with taxable wages in—			
	1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters	1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters
1.....	\$96	\$123	\$201	\$202	\$45	\$107	\$174	\$270
2.....	82	84	131	232	64	72	118	210
3.....	86	78	113	102	77	80	104	184
4.....	38	102	112	175	70	89	98	175
5 or more.....	150	85	131	102	140	112	115	102

<sup>1</sup> For each worker, annual earnings were divided by number of quarters of employment to obtain average quarterly earnings. Average quarterly earnings of workers employed 1 quarter, 2 quarters, 3 quarters, and 4 quarters were arrayed and the median found for each of the groups.

<sup>2</sup> Only 8 migrant workers had 4 or more employers in only 1 quarter.

Chart 1.—Frequency distribution of migrants and nonmigrants, by average quarterly earnings in covered employment, 1938



Of the nonmigrants with only 1 quarter of covered employment, 73 percent earned less than \$100. It is probable, in view of the high correlation between low earnings and short periods of employment, that there was an increase from 1937 to 1938 in the proportion of nonmigrants with only 1 quarter of covered employment. Such an increase would again suggest that changes from year to year in the proportion of casual workers in the nonmigrant group influence significantly the relationships between the earnings levels of the migrants and the nonmigrants.

When a comparison was made of migrants and nonmigrants with similar employment experience in terms of number of quarters of employment and number of employers, the migrants proved to be higher paid. That is to say, the average quarterly wages of the migrants were higher, as a rule, than those of the nonmigrants with the same number of employers and the same number of quarters of employment. There was first an inverse relationship and then a direct relationship between

earnings and the number of employers for both migrants and nonmigrants with 3 or more quarters of employment; that is, median average quarterly earnings first decreased and then increased with increases in the number of employers or changes in employment (table 3). In contrast, the median average quarterly earnings of the nonmigrants employed in only 1 quarter increased throughout with increases in the number of employers. There seemed to be no close correlation between median average quarterly wages and the number of employers, either for workers employed in 2 quarters or for migrants employed in 1 quarter only.

The varying relationships between median average quarterly wages and the number of employers per worker suggest that, for workers with 3 or 4 quarters of covered employment, a high rate of job turn-over usually leads to increased unemployment and reduced earnings. For the workers who are less firmly attached to the labor force in a given year, however, increases in job turn-over often mean relatively less unemployment and consequently higher earnings.

One of the most striking differences between the median average quarterly wages of the migrants and the nonmigrants in this array was found for workers employed by one employer in 1 quarter only. The median quarterly wage of the 38,000 nonmigrants in this group was only \$45 as compared with \$96 for the migrants. Nonmigrants with one employer constituted 94 percent of all nonmigrants with wage credits in 1 quarter only, and consequently their earnings were the most important factor in determining the median quar-

terly wage of the nonmigrants with taxable wages in 1 quarter. The fact that 19,000 nonmigrants with one employer earned less than \$45 in taxable wages in their 1 quarter of covered employment in 1938 tends to corroborate the hypothesis that the group included many casual unskilled workers.

The taxable wages of the one-employer migrants with covered employment in only 1 quarter indicate that these workers were both a higher paid and more regularly employed group of workers than the one-employer nonmigrants. Ten percent earned more than \$617, an additional 10 percent earned between \$340 and \$617, and still another 10 percent earned between \$203 and \$340; that is, 30 percent as compared with approximately 10 percent of the one-employer nonmigrants earned at least \$203.

#### *Number of Employers, 1938*

While the migrant and the nonmigrant workers with the greatest job turn-over during 1938 were employed by approximately the same number of different employers, 35 and 34 respectively, 79 percent of all nonmigrants as compared with only 39 percent of the migrants made no change of employers (table 4). The migrants tended to make more shifts back and forth between employers than did the nonmigrants; that is, a smaller proportion made the minimum number of shifts between employers. Of the three-employer migrants, for example, 48 percent made only two moves during the year as compared with 52 percent of the three-employer nonmigrants; 37 percent of the four-employer migrants as compared

**Table 4.—Migrants and nonmigrants, by number of employers and amount of taxable wages, and percentage distribution, by number of employers, 1938**

Taxable wages	Total migrants	Migrants with specified number of employers					Total nonmigrants	Nonmigrants with specified number of employers				
		1	2	3	4	5 or more		1	2	3	4	5 or more
Total.....	15,124	5,896	4,932	2,257	1,021	1,018	201,520	207,450	30,502	10,552	3,033	3,380
Percentage distribution.....	100.0	39.0	32.6	14.9	6.8	6.7	100.0	79.3	14.0	4.0	1.4	1.3
Less than \$50.....	550	120	305	93	15	8	20,215	25,838	2,817	410	96	45
50-99.....	606	121	296	124	35	30	15,308	11,617	2,732	690	204	95
100-199.....	1,186	232	507	250	105	86	21,430	14,942	4,305	1,388	422	280
200-299.....	1,148	225	475	245	110	87	10,301	10,915	3,450	1,185	437	314
300-399.....	1,100	242	418	234	110	90	14,433	9,771	2,927	1,041	365	329
400-499.....	1,016	275	367	182	102	90	13,617	9,478	2,603	918	327	291
500-999.....	4,167	1,671	1,214	619	326	337	63,763	49,050	9,137	2,904	1,058	1,014
1,000-1,499.....	2,542	1,367	653	266	98	158	42,510	35,879	4,496	1,169	430	530
1,500-1,999.....	1,425	822	332	127	64	80	22,627	19,603	2,109	485	164	266
2,000-2,499.....	626	380	148	48	19	31	10,333	9,114	877	182	60	100
2,500-2,999.....	307	195	77	21	7	7	4,756	4,238	360	76	30	52
3,000 and over.....	451	237	140	42	18	14	7,227	6,414	690	125	40	49
Median annual taxable wage.....	\$734.70	\$1,010.30	\$536.24	\$496.98	\$532.98	\$675.07	\$660.38	\$713.18	\$474.14	\$463.51	\$480.45	\$601.24

with 45 percent of the four-employer nonmigrants made three moves (table 5).

### One-Employer Migrants

Almost 6,000, or 39 percent of the migrants in the sample, were employed by the same employer throughout the period of their covered employment in 1938. While the exact composition of the one-employer migrant group was unknown, it seemed probable that many of these workers migrated in connection with their regular employment; that is, they were transferred by management from one operating unit of a multistate concern to another. Inclusion of the wage-record data of this group in the sample raised the median annual wage of the migrants, since the one-employer migrants had both steadier employment and higher earnings than the multi-employer migrants.<sup>3</sup>

A comparison of one-employer migrants with all workers, distributed by industry in the fourth quarter of 1938, showed a somewhat higher proportion of the one-employer migrants in manufacturing and mining and somewhat smaller proportions in contract construction and particularly in the service industries. The firms employing the greatest number of one-employer migrants included some of the largest industrial concerns in

the country, with production units in several States and national markets for their products. Many of the one-employer migrants were in industries such as meat packing and cigarette and steel manufacturing, in which a few large concerns furnish a very large proportion of the jobs in the industry.

These firms apparently had numerous workers continuously on their pay rolls who were sent from plant to plant or from one headquarters office to another. Many of them were probably skilled mechanics, engineers, salesmen, foremen, and managers. In addition to workers of this type, the one-employer migrant group doubtless included some employees of multistate concerns who were permanently transferred from one operating unit to another during the course of the year.

Still other one-employer migrants may have been employees in industries dominated by several large concerns who lost their jobs in one State and by chance were employed by another unit of their original employing concern in another State.<sup>4</sup> In industries with great concentration of ownership, the chances are high that a worker who lost his job and moved to another State would, if he remained in the same industry, be reemployed by the same employer. For example, it has been

<sup>3</sup> This statement does not explain the difference between the 1937 and 1938 earnings distributions of migrant workers, since wage-record data for one-employer migrants were undoubtedly included in the 1937 tabulation.

<sup>4</sup> In the records used in this study all establishments under a single ownership carried the same employer code number, and workers in these establishments were thus classified as working for one employer.

Table 5.—Percentage distribution of workers with taxable wages, by number of employers and number of shifts between employers, 1938

Number of employers	Number of workers	Number of shifts between employers																		
		Total	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16 or more	Unknown
Migrants																				
1.....	5,896	100.0	100.0																	
2.....	4,007	100.0		65.3	19.7	0.5	2.9	1.4	.7	.5	( <sup>1</sup> )									
3.....	2,247	100.0			48.3	28.3	13.8	5.4	2.0	1.1	.0	.1	.2	.2						
4.....	1,018	100.0				37.4	28.6	20.6	7.8	2.6	1.1	.0	.4	.4	.3	.1	.1			
5.....	465	100.0					27.7	28.4	22.2	11.0	4.2	2.9	1.5	1.3	.4					.4
6.....	211	100.0						25.6	24.6	10.9	12.8	8.1	4.3	.9	1.4	1.4	.5			.5
7.....	120	100.0							13.3	20.0	16.7	10.1	11.7	10.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	.8		3.3
8 or more.....	220	100.0								3.2	6.8	13.2	11.8	7.7	9.0	5.5	4.5	5.9		31.8
Unknown <sup>2</sup> .....	50	100.0																		100.0
Nonmigrants																				
1.....	207,459	100.0	100.0																	
2.....	36,502	100.0		64.7	22.2	7.1	2.9	1.7	1.1	.3										
3.....	10,552	100.0			52.4	14.8	12.3	5.2	2.6	1.3	10.8	.3	.2	.1						
4.....	3,633	100.0				44.7	24.9	14.4	7.8	4.1	1.5	1.0	.7	.2	.3	.1	.2	.1		
5.....	1,540	100.0					41.0	22.3	17.3	7.5	5.2	2.3	1.0	.6	.6	.5	.1	.5		.6
6.....	727	100.0						32.5	21.6	17.7	9.5	7.3	3.7	2.3	2.1	1.1	.4	.4		1.8
7.....	452	100.0							38.6	15.1	16.6	10.4	7.5	4.4	2.4	.4	2.0	.7		1.9
8 or more.....	661	100.0								10.0	9.7	13.0	12.4	7.6	5.6	5.9	4.9	1.7		29.2

<sup>1</sup> Less than 0.05 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 46 cases improperly coded and 5 cases not coded.

estimated that the chances are 1 in 3 that a worker who loses his job with the United States Steel Corporation and is reemployed in the industry will be reemployed by that corporation.

It is also possible that some of the workers in the one-employer migrant group were misclassified and were actually nonmigrants, continuously employed by multistate concerns outside the State of the home office. The extent of errors of this type is unknown; a generous estimate would allow for inaccurate classification of a maximum of one-fourth of the one-employer migrants.<sup>5</sup>

As previously indicated, one-employer migrants as a group had both steadier employment and higher earnings than either the nonmigrants or the migrants with more than one employer.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the median annual taxable wage of the one-employer migrants was \$1,019 as compared with \$660 for all nonmigrants (table 4) and \$546 for the migrants with more than one employer. Since the median taxable wage of the one-employer nonmigrants was only \$713, it is evident that the high earnings of the one-employer migrants cannot be entirely explained by the probable inclusion in the group of some workers who should have been classified as one-employer nonmigrants. The median taxable wage of the one-employer migrants was high even as compared with that of the nonmigrants who were employed in more than 1 quarter; for these more steadily employed nonmigrants, the median taxable wage was \$900. Obviously, the one-employer migrant group must have contained a fairly large proportion of highly skilled and highly paid workers.

The employment experience of the one-employer migrants also differed from that of the other groups in that a larger proportion of the one-employer migrants had earnings in covered employment in all 4 quarters of 1938 (table 6). About 76 percent of them had some earnings in covered employment in all quarters as compared with 56 percent of the multi-employer migrants and of all the nonmigrants and 57 percent of the one-employer nonmigrants. Employment in a quarter may mean work for 1 day or for 13 weeks. It is possible that the higher taxable wages of the one-employer migrants resulted not only from

<sup>5</sup> This type of error probably also occurred in the 1937 study. See Bureau Report No. 11, op. cit., for an explanation of the coding practice which leads to misclassification.

<sup>6</sup> Only in the case of the migrants with five or more employers did a larger proportion (78 percent) have employment in 4 quarters.

Table 6.—Percentage distribution of migrants with specified number of States of employment, by number of quarters of employment, and median annual wage of migrants, by number of States of employment, 1938

Number of States of employment	Number of migrants	Percent of migrants with taxable wages in—					Median annual wage
		Total	1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters	
All migrants							
Total.....	15, 124	100.0	1.8	13.6	20.8	63.8	\$735
2.....	14, 189	100.0	1.9	13.9	20.8	63.4	728
3.....	807	100.0	.2	7.7	22.7	69.4	826
4 or more.....	128	100.0	1.6	6.2	15.6	70.0	890
With 1 employer							
Total.....	5, 890	100.0	.6	10.0	13.5	75.9	\$1,019
2.....	5, 764	100.0	.6	10.2	13.5	75.7	1,009
3.....	126	100.0	( <sup>1</sup> )	3.4	14.3	83.3	1,452
4 or more.....	16	( <sup>1</sup> )					1,333
With more than 1 employer							
Total.....	9, 228	100.0	2.6	15.8	25.5	56.1	\$546
2.....	8, 435	100.0	2.8	16.5	25.7	55.0	526
3.....	681	100.0	.3	8.7	24.2	66.8	727
4 or more.....	112	100.0	1.8	5.3	16.1	76.8	847

<sup>1</sup> Less than 0.05 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages not computed; the numbers of workers in this group with taxable wages in 1, 2, 3, and 4 quarters were 0, 2, 2, and 12, respectively.

higher wage rates but also from steadier employment during each quarter as well as from more quarters of employment.

The one-employer migrants had an additional distinguishing characteristic in that they were a somewhat less mobile group than those with more than one employer. Their taxable wages in covered employment were distributed among a smaller number of States, and they tended to move back and forth between States less frequently. A somewhat smaller proportion of the one-employer than of the multi-employer migrants employed in two States, 55 percent as compared with 59 percent, divided their employment between contiguous States.

### Multi-Employer Migrants

In contrast, the migrants with more than one employer were characterized by relatively low earnings in covered employment. Almost half of this group had less than \$500 in taxable wages in 1938, and approximately three-fourths had wages of less than \$1,000. However, while their earnings were lower than those of the



nonmigrants as a whole, they compared favorably with those of the multi-employer nonmigrants. In 1938 the median taxable wage for the migrants with more than one employer exceeded that of the multi-employer nonmigrants by \$63.76. Possibly the difference may be attributed to the fact that 82 percent of the multi-employer migrants had employment in 3 or 4 quarters, in contrast to 77 percent of the multi-employer nonmigrants. Quite probably a difference in the sex composition of the two groups also had some influence on their average wage rates. In addition, there may have been differences in the occupational characteristics of the two groups or in the average number of weeks of employment within their quarters of employment.

### Number of States of Employment

In any distribution of the migrant group by number of States of employment, the multi-employer migrants predominate numerically. Moreover, the greater the number of States of employment, the larger is the proportion of migrants with more than one employer (table 6). Notwithstanding this fact, the migrants employed in three States and in four or more States had more quarters of employment and higher median annual taxable wages than either the migrants employed in two States or the nonmigrants as a whole.

If the one-employer and the multi-employer migrants are segregated, a similar relationship between number of quarters of employment and number of States of employment holds for both groups. The median annual taxable wage of the multi-employer migrants also increased markedly with the number of States of employment. Similarly, the one-employer migrants employed in three States had a much higher median annual taxable wage than did those who were employed in only two States.

The amount of movement back and forth between States is shown in table 7. A majority of the workers employed in two States, whether they worked for one or more than one employer, moved only once. Approximately one-third of this group made two moves, returning to the first State of employment at some time during the year. Very few of the workers who were employed in two States made as many as seven moves during the year. A slightly smaller proportion of the

Table 7.—Percentage distribution of migrants with specified number of States of employment, by number of interstate moves, 1938

Number of States of employment	Number of migrants	Percent of migrants with specified number of interstate moves								
		Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
All migrants										
Total.....	15,124	100.0	53.8	32.7	8.2	8.2	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.1
2.....	14,189	100.0	57.3	32.5	6.0	2.5	.7	.2	.2	0
3.....	807	100.0	40.3	33.7	14.1	7.4	2.7	1.0	0.8	0
4 or more.....	128	100.0	.....	29.0	25.0	21.1	11.6	7.0	6.3	0
With 1 employer										
Total.....	5,806	100.0	57.6	37.0	4.3	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1	( <sup>1</sup> )
2.....	5,754	100.0	59.0	37.0	3.4	.5	.1	0	0	0
3.....	126	100.0	40.7	39.7	4.8	4.0	3.2	1.6	0	0
4 or more.....	10	100.0	.....	43.6	12.5	25.0	6.3	6.3	6.3	0
With more than 1 employer										
Total.....	9,228	100.0	51.3	29.9	10.7	4.8	1.9	0.7	0.5	0.2
2.....	8,435	100.0	50.2	29.0	8.7	3.7	1.0	.4	.4	0
3.....	681	100.0	39.1	32.6	15.9	8.0	2.6	.9	.9	.9
4 or more.....	112	100.0	.....	26.8	26.8	20.5	12.5	7.1	6.3	0

<sup>1</sup> Less than 0.05 percent.

workers employed in three or more States made only the minimum number of moves, but a slightly larger proportion moved back and forth between one or more of the States in which they were employed. No matter in how many States they were employed, the one-employer migrants moved back and forth less frequently than did multi-employer migrants employed in the same number of States.

### Interstate Movements

The patterns of the interstate movements of the covered workers in 1938 corresponded closely to those disclosed by other studies. In absolute numbers, the States with the largest number of covered industrial workers were the origin and destination of the bulk of the migrants. New York alone, the first State of employment in 1938 of 14 percent of all the workers in the sample, was the State of origin of 11.0 percent of the two-State migrants and the State of destination of an additional 11.5 percent of the same group. New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, which were the States of first employment in 1938 for 30 percent of all the workers in the sample, were the States of origin of 25 percent of the two-State migrants and the States of destination for 24

percent. While the 1937 wage data tabulated the State in which a migrant's account number was issued as his State of origin and the present study defined the State of origin as the State of first employment in 1938, the relative volume of in-migration and out-migration of these States was remarkably similar for the 2 years. In no case was there a difference of more than 1 percent.

Table 8 shows the number of workers in the sample employed in each State at any time during 1938, the relative importance of the migrants in the total covered labor force of each State, and the proportion of all migrants in the sample employed in each State. Since all migrants, by definition, had taxable wages in at least two States, each migrant is counted two or more times in this tabulation. Consequently it is not possible to obtain a national figure by totaling the State figures for covered workers or to compare State percentages with the national ratio of 1 migrant to every 20 covered workers.

Nine industrial States—New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, California, Michigan, Texas, and Massachusetts—apparently employed almost 50 percent of all the migrants at some time during 1938, if it is assumed that the great majority of the migrants were counted only twice. However, since these nine States employed more than 60 percent of the covered workers in the sample, migrants were generally a less important element in the labor force in these States than elsewhere. In all these States except New Jersey, migrants represented less than 10 percent of the covered labor force in 1938. In only seven other jurisdictions was the ratio of migrants to nonmigrants so low. Of these others, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and North Carolina were also industrial States.

In some of the smaller or less industrialized States the migrants tended to be a relatively more important factor in the covered labor force. For example, in New Hampshire, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, and Delaware, migrants comprised at least one out of every five covered workers in 1938. Seasonality of employment in Alaska accounts for the high proportion of migrants in that jurisdiction. There was no jurisdiction in 1938 which did not utilize migrant labor, but the ratios of migrants to nonmigrants varied greatly. In the low State, Wisconsin, only 6.5 percent of the covered workers employed during the year were

Table 8.—Number of workers and migrants in covered employment at any time in 1938 by State, and percent of migrants to all covered workers employed in each State and to all migrants

State	Total covered workers †	Covered migrants	Percent migrants of—	
			Covered workers in State †	All covered migrants in the United States
Alabama.....	3,004	387	9.9	2.6
Alaska.....	250	93	37.2	.6
Arizona.....	1,000	203	20.3	1.3
Arkansas.....	1,807	288	15.9	1.9
California.....	16,705	1,455	8.7	9.6
Colorado.....	2,337	261	11.2	1.7
Connecticut.....	5,620	431	7.7	2.8
Delaware.....	846	189	22.3	1.2
District of Columbia.....	1,858	479	25.8	3.2
Florida.....	4,298	616	14.3	4.1
Georgia.....	4,474	473	10.6	3.1
Hawaii.....	1,004	89	8.9	.6
Idaho.....	895	137	15.3	.9
Illinois.....	22,036	2,118	9.6	14.0
Indiana.....	7,772	809	11.6	8.9
Iowa.....	3,883	405	10.4	2.7
Kansas.....	2,845	459	16.1	3.0
Kentucky.....	3,912	546	14.0	3.6
Louisiana.....	4,046	469	11.6	3.1
Maine.....	2,196	255	11.6	1.7
Maryland.....	4,528	729	16.1	4.8
Massachusetts.....	12,764	932	7.3	6.2
Michigan.....	13,862	1,012	7.3	6.7
Minnesota.....	4,922	459	9.3	3.0
Mississippi.....	1,977	280	14.2	1.9
Missouri.....	7,707	1,249	16.2	8.3
Montana.....	923	169	17.2	1.1
Nebraska.....	1,931	255	13.2	1.7
Nevada.....	210	86	41.0	.6
New Hampshire.....	1,422	288	20.3	1.9
New Jersey.....	11,629	1,550	13.3	10.2
New Mexico.....	716	212	29.6	1.4
New York.....	40,723	3,309	8.1	21.9
North Carolina.....	6,162	500	8.1	3.3
North Dakota.....	626	102	16.3	.7
Ohio.....	17,070	1,637	9.6	10.8
Oklahoma.....	3,439	485	14.1	3.2
Oregon.....	2,369	306	12.9	2.0
Pennsylvania.....	24,202	1,758	7.3	11.6
Rhode Island.....	2,316	217	9.4	1.4
South Carolina.....	2,741	337	12.3	2.2
South Dakota.....	672	97	14.4	.6
Tennessee.....	4,639	591	12.8	3.9
Texas.....	11,426	969	8.7	6.6
Utah.....	984	160	16.3	1.1
Vermont.....	847	139	16.4	.9
Virginia.....	5,055	730	14.6	4.9
Washington.....	3,543	495	14.0	3.3
West Virginia.....	3,765	605	16.1	4.0
Wisconsin.....	6,630	432	6.5	2.9
Wyoming.....	619	114	22.0	.8

† It is not possible to obtain a national total by totaling State figures for covered workers, since all migrants, by definition, had taxable wages in at least 2 States, and each migrant is therefore counted at least twice in the tabulation.

migrants as compared with 41.0 percent in Nevada, at the other end of the range.

In 1938 the great majority of the migrants, 93.8 percent, had earnings in covered employment in two States; 5.3 percent in three States, and the remaining 0.9 percent in four or more States. Of the two-State migrants employed in the continental United States, 58 percent migrated to contiguous States. The remaining 42 percent crossed at least two State lines. These figures

serve as a rough index to the amount of long-distance migration, although the use of non-contiguity of States of origin and States of destination as a measurement has serious limitations. For example, workers migrating to certain points in Texas from contiguous States may cover considerable distances, and workers migrating between noncontiguous States in New England may travel

comparatively short distances. However, among those migrants employed during 1938 in two non-contiguous States was a sizable group of workers who divided their employment between as widely separated States as Massachusetts and Illinois, New York and California, Ohio and Alabama, Illinois and California, Utah and New York, and Michigan and California.