

SUMMARY EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT
DEVELOPMENTS, FEBRUARY 1968

Employment advanced in February while the unemployment rate rose to 3.7 percent. In January, employment gains were held down by bad weather, but total unemployment dropped more than seasonally because of a reduction in teenage unemployment.

Although a substantial expansion in employment has occurred over the past year, the unemployment situation this winter is essentially unchanged from last winter. The pace of the employment increase has been just rapid enough to absorb the number of additional people entering the labor force and seeking employment, but not rapid enough to drop unemployment below the levels of a year ago. Both the labor force and employment rose by 1.5 million between last winter and this winter (December-February averages), with men and women sharing about equally in the rise. Unemployment averaged 3.0 million in each period and there were no major improvements for any of the major age-sex-color groups. Unemployment rates were also unchanged over this period.

Employment Developments

Employment rose substantially in February (550,000 seasonally adjusted) after a weak performance in January. All of the

major age-sex groups had significant employment increases between January and February. The largest increases were recorded by women and teenagers.

Nonfarm payroll employment rose to 67.7 million (seasonally adjusted). The gain was broadly based, with increases in both the goods-producing and service-producing industries.

Nearly half of the increase in nonfarm payroll employment was centered in contract construction, where employment increased by 250,000 (seasonally adjusted), reaching a record high of 3.5 million. The February increase was, in part, the result of a return of workers to construction jobs after a period of bad weather in January. Except for January, employment in contract construction has picked up substantially since October, after showing little growth during most of 1967.

In manufacturing, employment rose by 65,000 (seasonally adjusted) in February, despite a 35,000 increase in the number of workers off payrolls because of strikes. At 19.6 million (seasonally adjusted), manufacturing employment edged above the previous record high established in January 1967. Manufacturing employment fell

Changes in Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment,
Winter 1967 to Winter 1968*
(in thousands)

	Total	Men, aged 20 and over	Women, aged 20 and over	16 to 19 year-olds
Civilian labor force. . .	1,515	710	968	-165
White	1,361	687	880	-205
Nonwhite.	154	24	88	41
Employment.	1,487	708	956	-178
White	1,315	660	865	-209
Nonwhite.	172	49	90	32
Unemployment.	28	3	12	13
White	45	27	14	4
Nonwhite.	-18	-24	-2	8

*These data are based on December to February averages.

sharply in the early months of 1967. Since August, however, it has risen by 250,000.

The manufacturing industries showing large gains in February were transportation equipment (19,000), electrical machinery industries (13,000), apparel (13,000), and textiles (10,000).

The service-producing industries continued to register sizable job gains in February. The most significant increases (seasonally adjusted) were in trade (100,000), State and local government (55,000), and miscellaneous service industries (45,000).

Hours and Earnings

The workweek (seasonally adjusted) for factory production workers rose by 0.5 hour in February to 40.7 hours, after declining by the same amount a month earlier. The increase included 0.1 hour of additional overtime; overtime averaged 3.6 hours in February. Most of the increase in the factory workweek took place in the nondurables sector.

Average hourly earnings for rank and file workers rose by 1 cent over the month to \$2.76. Declines in hourly earnings in mining and contract construction were more than offset by increases in trade and finance. Compared with February 1967, hourly earnings were up 14 cents (or 5.3 percent). Weekly earnings averaged \$104.33 in February--\$1.20 more than in January and \$5.03 more than a year ago (5.1 percent).

Unemployment

Unemployment in February totaled 3.3 million, the same as in December, after allowance for seasonal changes. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, after declining to 3.5 percent in January, moved up to 3.7 percent, the same as December 1967 and a year ago. The rise was primarily due to an increase in teenage jobseekers, with three-fourths of these additional teenagers looking for part-time jobs. Teenagers had also accounted for the bulk of the unemployment decline in January. At 12.6 percent (seasonally adjusted), the February teenage jobless rate was virtually the same as in December 1967 and a year ago. February unemployment rates for adult men (2.3 percent), adult women (4.0 percent), married men (1.7 percent), full-time workers (3.4 percent), nonwhite workers (7.2 percent), and blue-collar workers (4.3 percent) were nearly identical to the rates of February 1967.

With the exception of a sharp but short-lived rise last fall, the national unemployment rate has exhibited stability since early 1966, averaging about 3.8 percent. Unemployment rates for adult men, married men, and full-time workers have been comparatively stable over the entire period, whereas the rates for women and teenagers have fluctuated in response to changing economic conditions and work preferences.

State insured unemployment declined more than seasonally in mid-February, the rate falling from 2.4 to 2.3 percent.