
Unemployment in Philadelphia declined from 46 per cent of the gainful workers in 1933 to 25 per cent in 1937, but there were marked variations in the trends of different age groups and in the proportion of women employed, according to a report made public by the Works Progress Administration today. "Inexperienced young workers under 25 years of age were unemployed to the extent of 37 per cent, even in 1937," while "the industrially aged workers too received less than their share of reemployment," Corrington Gill, Assistant WPA Administrator, pointed out in transmitting the report to Administrator Harry L. Hopkins.

"The combination of these factors," Mr. Gill continued, "resulted in a situation in which declining unemployment was accompanied by an increase in the number of those persons who were unemployed longest. This indicates that, so long as the volume of unemployment remains at even its recent lowest level, a certain number of those who were working in industry prior to 1929 have no reasonable expectation of ever again being reabsorbed."

"Discounting the change in the size of population, there were 19 per cent more women in the labor market in 1937 than in 1931," Mr. Gill said. He added that many of these succeeded in finding jobs and "at least so long as the level of unemployment remains as high as it is, they will probably stay in the labor market, whether employed or unemployed."
"Existing social security legislation is of little value to many of the unemployed groups. Aside from those who are attached to occupations which are not covered by the existing unemployment insurance legislation, the unemployed youths remain outside the protection of these laws so long as they are without opportunity to start working in industry and to amass credit toward unemployment insurance. Neither can those whose unemployment today is of long duration lay claim to benefits from unemployment insurance funds. Apparently, so long as unemployment remains as extensive as it has been during recent years of depression and recovery, some system of assistance for those who cannot qualify for unemployment benefits will continue to be needed not only to provide a measure of security for these groups, but also to afford them an opportunity to receive that training or to retain that training which should help them eventually to find employment in private industry."

Commenting on the decline in unemployment between 1933 and 1937, Mr. Gill said: "It is apparent from these studies that during the depth of the depression employers kept as many workers attached to their plants as they could afford. This was usually accomplished by the device of part-time employment. A considerable proportion of the increased production during the years 1933-1937 therefore resulted in more work for those already employed, that is, in a decline of part-time employment rather than of unemployment."

In addition to an analysis of unemployment census data, the report also contains summaries of findings on the last ten years of employment and unemployment experience of selected groups of workers in such occupations as machinists, weavers, radio workers, and others.
The report, "Recent Trends in Employment and Unemployment in Philadelphia," was prepared by Dr. Gladys L. Palmer and is based on a series of studies conducted by the WPA's National Research Project, directed by David Wointraub and Irving Kaplan. The Industrial Research Department of the University of Pennsylvania cooperated in these studies, with Dr. Gladys L. Palmer, Research Associate of the University and Consultant of the National Research Project, as the economist in charge.