

**(H) EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS****Employment**

In a country like Ceylon, where there is no well organized labour market, reliable and detailed data on employment and unemployment cannot be obtained other than by elaborate surveys. One such survey, devoted completely to the collection of data on all employment aspects, was carried out in 1959/60. The Survey of Ceylon's Consumer Finances 1963, even though it had a different primary purpose, also provided significant data on the subject. There is a subsequent Report by an ILO Expert on an inquiry conducted in 1964 into the employment and unemployment problems of the rural population by means of a purposive sample of 13 villages. The results of the last mentioned survey needs to be used with caution because the sample was not random one and gave room for biases. As disclosed by the 1959/60 survey, the total number of unemployed in Ceylon was 340,000. The Survey of Consumer Finances conducted in 1963 estimated 458,000 as being unemployed.

The monthly unemployment figures published by the Labour Department in the *Ceylon Labour Gazette* refer to the total number of registrants for employment and better employment enrolled with the Employment Exchanges. Even though these figures do not give the total number unemployed, they, in general indicate the trend over time.

During the latter part of 1965 the numbers registered for employment started increasing rapidly. This trend was continued right up to the end of the first quarter of 1966. The second quarter, however, recorded a virtual lull which was followed by a second period of rapid increase during the third quarter. Finally, in the last quarter the numbers declined slightly.

There was a 19 per cent rise during 1966 in the number registered, compared with a 20 per cent rise during 1965. The comparable figure for 1964 was 7 per cent. The increases, during 1966, in the different categories of registrants were 23 per cent in the semi-skilled, 21 per cent in the unskilled, 19 per cent in the technical and clerical, and 8 per cent in the skilled. These figures may be compared with the corresponding figures of 27, 10, 34 and 12 for the year 1965.

Table II (H)-1 shows the number of persons placed in employment in recent years by the Labour Exchanges.

TABLE II (H)—1

The Number of Persons placed in Employment and its relative importance to total registrants in each category.

Year	Technical Clerical	%	Skilled	%	Semi- skilled	%	Un- skilled	%	Total	%
1956	1,913	11.9	845	8.6	1,565	6.1	4,162	12.1	8,485	9.9
1957	1,176	6.3	709	5.3	1,180	3.8	3,053	6.4	6,118	5.5
1958	1,327	9.2	800	5.9	1,006	3.1	2,251	4.4	5,884	5.0
1959	1,667	8.0	1,045	7.5	1,275	3.8	3,218	5.4	7,205	5.6
1960	1,400	5.3	771	4.6	1,247	3.6	4,744	6.5	8,162	5.4
1961	1,259	4.6	631	3.5	964	2.8	2,794	3.9	5,648	3.7
1962	1,263	3.7	468	2.7	809	2.3	2,315	3.5	4,857	3.2
1963	1,322	3.7	502	3.0	836	2.3	2,466	3.9	5,129	3.4
1964	1,722	4.4	535	3.1	945	2.5	3,599	5.5	6,801	4.3
1965	1,495	2.7	846	4.2	1,035	2.1	3,753	5.0	7,129	3.6
1966*	1,048	1.6	749	3.5	910	1.5	4,149	4.6	6,856	2.9

Source : Department of Labour.

\* Provisional

### Employment in the Public Sector

The inquiry conducted by the Central Bank into changes in employment in the public sector during 1965 was repeated for 1966. On addressing all the Government and Semi-government Institutions, the Bank was able to obtain data from 58 per cent of Government Departments and 56 per cent of Semi-Government Institutions. The latter group includes Government Corporations and Institutions like Universities and the Central Bank.

Of the employees, as at the end of 1966, in the 45 Government Departments that responded to the inquiry, 67 per cent were permanent, 10 per cent were temporary and 23 per cent were casual. For the same 45 Departments, the corresponding figures as at the end of 1965 were 69, 11 and 20 per cent respectively. Taking the difference between the employment figures at the end and at the beginning of the year as a measure of the change in employment, it is estimated that permanent and temporary employment in Government departments has increased by 4 per cent.

Among the employees in the 25 Semi-Government Institutions from which the Bank was able to obtain figures, 82 per cent were permanent, 2 per cent were temporary and 16 per cent were casual. The comparable figures as at the end of 1965 were 86, 3 and 11 per cent respectively. According to the reporting, permanent and temporary employment in Semi-Government Institutions increased by 13 per cent.

## Labour Relations

During the years 1965 and 1966 the number of strikes and the number of man-days lost as a consequence of strikes have decreased rapidly. For instance, the total number of man-days lost in 1965 was 35 per cent less than that in 1964; and in 1966, as shown by the provisional figures for that year, the decrease is as much as 67 per cent over the figures for 1965.

In the plantation sector the number of man-days lost during 1966 is the lowest since 1955, and is 57 per cent below the average yearly loss during the last decade. In the non-plantation sector, the decrease was even more pronounced and was 90 per cent less than the average for the decade.

Table II (H) 2 shows the number of strikes, the number of workers involved and the number of man-days lost as a result of strikes.

TABLE II (H) 2

### Strikes

Year	Plantations			Other Employment		
	No. of Strikes	Workers involved	Man-days lost	No. of Strikes	Workers involved	Man-days lost
1956	99	56,908	200,888	115	31,852	152,966
1957	177	297,061	618,050	127	70,239	190,448
1958	123	39,372	340,632	96	42,713	399,228
1959	177	47,318	352,095	71	42,453	460,141
1960	123	42,528	259,948	37	4,839	15,189½
1961	90	29,223	317,866	39	38,018	170,372
1962	138	42,569	193,792	50	25,730	301,332
1963	174	62,511	359,905	58	29,819	479,673
1964	201	68,009	611,060	103	21,400	274,623
1965	175	70,929	482,259	55	10,085	39,952
1966*	117	35,944	159,327	32	4,007	29,571

Source : Department of Labour.

\* Provisional

The relative importance among the underlying causes for strikes seems to have remained practically unchanged over the years. As in the past, the dominant causes during 1966 were loss of employment, causing 25 per cent, estate rules, working arrangements etc. causing 32 per cent, delays in payment causing 10 per cent, and general demands causing another 15 per cent of the strikes.