

## SEASONAL UNEMPLOYMENT

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has issued a publication on "Regularity of Employment in the Women's Ready-to-Wear Garment Industries." This study was undertaken in co-operation with the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. It is in reality a study of seasonal unemployment. In one of the industries specially observed, it was found that one-tenth of the employes had work for less than ten weeks of the past year. More than four-fifths had work for less than forty weeks. In the cloak, suit and skirt industry, the report shows payrolls in the dullest weeks covering less than one-half of the average week and only a little more than one-quarter of the payrolls of the busiest weeks.

In one of a number of studies made by the Ontario Commission on Unemployment, it is pointed out that trained nurses on the average are employed but seven or eight months in the year. In consequence, nurses who find employment through private agencies earn on an average only \$500 a year, including an allowance for board during the time when they are employed. The Nurses' Registry shows an average yearly wage for nurses of \$600, or \$700 if an allowance is made for board. Factory employment through the investigation of the Ontario Commission has been shown to be highly seasonal. Instances are given of firms employing in the rush season twice as many workers as in the slack season.

The Ontario Commission on Unemployment has advised the Government to confer with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, as representing manufacturers, with a view to reducing the amount of seasonal unemployment in factories. Individual employers, both in Canada and the United States, have already been able to reduce seasonal unemployment. The Ontario Report quotes from the experience of one manufacturer who, by giving a premium on advance orders, has been able to do away with night work and has increased the steadiness of his workers' employment. He states at the same time that the amount paid in premiums has been more than made up in the amount saved in larger runs, in the elimination of night work and in being able to retain skilled workers in his employ.

Both the Ontario Report and the Report from the United States Bureau of Statistics say that little attention has as yet been paid by employers to the subject, of reducing seasonal unemployment. Regularity of employment is at least as important to wage earners as the elimination of overtime, the shortening of regular hours of work, and the raising of the rate of wages. Irregularity of employment is largely at the root of industrial unrest and is a constant hindrance to industrial efficiency. This is one of the fields of inquiry and work which should be entered on by the new Superintendent of the Ontario Trades and Labor Department. He will find the subject clearly outlined in the Report of the Ontario Commission. It is plain that until seasonal unemployment has been largely reduced, workers affected by it will be constantly in a state of unrest, and the value of their work to the country will be less than it ought to be.