

7053

7053

Dhananjayrao Gadgil Library



GIPE-PUNE-007053

7050

7053

**WAGES IN THE UNITED STATES  
1914-1926**

**STUDIES OF AMERICAN WAGES**

**PUBLISHED BY THE  
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE  
BOARD, INC.**

**247 Park Avenue, New York**

	<i>Cloth Binding</i>
<b>Wartime Changes in Wages (1919) . . . . .</b>	<b>\$2.00</b>
<b>Wages and Hours in Anthracite Min- ing (1922) . . . . .</b>	<b>2.00</b>
<b>Wages, Hours and Employment of Railroad Workers (1924) . . . . .</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Wages and Hours in American Industry (1925) . . . . .</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Wages in the United States (1926) . . . . .</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Wages in the United States, 1914-1926 . .</b>	<b>2.50</b>

*Complete list of publications sent on request*

7054

# WAGES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1914-1926



NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE BOARD, Inc.  
NEW YORK  
1927

X:952.73

F7

7053

COPYRIGHT, 1927  
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE BOARD, INC.

*Published April, 1927*  
No. 120

## FOREWORD

**T**HE present volume is the fourteenth publication of the National Industrial Conference Board dealing with the trend of wages, hours of work and employment in American industry. These studies have been progressively extended in scope until, in their present form, they afford a general picture of wage conditions and movements in all the more important occupational fields. To the basic results of its continuous investigation of wage conditions in the major branches of manufacturing industry there have been added the results of its studies of wages in gas and electric plants, railroad transportation, building construction and in agriculture. A survey of salaries of clerical workers in industrial and commercial occupations in the larger cities of the United States was made in 1926, but has been published in a separate volume. Chiefly because of the stability of wages in anthracite mining, under the agreement concluded early in 1926 as the result of a strike, it has not been thought necessary to include in the present volume the information on wages in that field, which appeared in the last preceding volume on wages and which remained practically unchanged during 1926.

In the text of the present volume somewhat more attention than heretofore has been given to the relation of the wage situation during 1926 to the business and industrial conditions in the various fields during that year. Despite the extraordinary stability of wage levels during 1926, the situation has by no means been devoid of interest and significance from the point of view of the business executive or the student of economic problems. In fact, the very stability and relatively high level of wages in face of declining prices and fluctuations in industrial activity has made the American wage situation a matter of extraordinary interest and speculation both among domestic and foreign observers. The year 1926 from this point of view may, in the course of time, be considered retrospectively as a year of especial moment in

American economic history, if it should be followed by wide changes in business and industrial conditions. For this reason it is believed that the trend of wages in recent years and the situation in 1926 will be found worthy of special study.

This volume is the result of an investigation conducted by Mr. H. F. Browne and assistants, of the Conference Board's Research Staff, under the supervision of the Board's Staff Economic Council.

In the preparation of its studies, the National Industrial Conference Board avails itself of the experience and judgment of the business executives who compose its membership and of recognized authorities in special fields, in addition to the scientific knowledge and equipment of its Research Staff. The publications of the Board thus finally represent the result of scientific investigation and broad business experience and the conclusions expressed therein are those of the Conference Board as a body.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>FOREWORD . . . . .</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>I. GENERAL WAGE SITUATION IN 1926 . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Wage Stability . . . . .	1
New Factors in the Wage Problem . . . . .	2
Wage Supplements . . . . .	2
Regularity of Employment . . . . .	3
Change in Employers' Attitude . . . . .	3
Wage Levels and Industrial Activity . . . . .	4
Wages and Productive Efficiency . . . . .	11
Labor's Share in Increased Efficiency . . . . .	11
Wages and Prices . . . . .	12
Wages and Industrial Relations . . . . .	16
Foreign Wages . . . . .	16
"The Secret of High Wages" . . . . .	18
<b>II. WAGES IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES . . . . .</b>	<b>20</b>
Methods and Scope of Investigation . . . . .	20
Classification of Wage Earners . . . . .	22
Treatment of Wage Data . . . . .	23
Treatment of Employment Data . . . . .	25
Treatment of Data on Hours of Work . . . . .	26
General Results. . . . .	26
Nominal Earnings . . . . .	26
"Real Earnings" . . . . .	33
Employment . . . . .	37
Hours of Work . . . . .	40
<b>III. WAGES IN PUBLIC UTILITIES . . . . .</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>IV. WAGES IN THE BUILDING TRADES . . . . .</b>	<b>53</b>
Building Operations in 1926 . . . . .	53
Trend of Prices of Building Materials . . . . .	55
Trend of Wages in the Building Trades . . . . .	56
Material Prices, Wages and Volume of Building . . . . .	61
<b>V. WAGES IN AGRICULTURE . . . . .</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>VI. WAGES ON CLASS I RAILROADS . . . . .</b>	<b>69</b>
Railroad Operations in 1926 . . . . .	69
Wages, Hours and Employment on Class I Railroads . . . . .	70



CHAPTER	PAGE
<b>VII. STATISTICAL DATA FOR SPECIFIC MANUFACTURING IN-</b>	
<b>DUSTRIES</b> . . . . .	85
Introduction . . . . .	85
Iron and Steel Manufacturing . . . . .	120
Metal Trades:	
Agricultural Implement Manufacturing . . . . .	88
Automobile Manufacturing . . . . .	90
Electrical Apparatus Manufacturing . . . . .	92
Foundry and Machine Shop Products . . . . .	94
Foundries . . . . .	96
Machines and Machine Tools . . . . .	98
Heavy Equipment . . . . .	100
Hardware and Small Parts . . . . .	102
Textiles:	
Cotton Manufacturing—North . . . . .	104
Cotton Manufacturing—South . . . . .	106
Hosiery and Knit Goods Manufacturing . . . . .	108
Silk Manufacturing . . . . .	112
Wool Manufacturing . . . . .	114
Leather:	
Leather Tanning and Finishing . . . . .	128
Boot and Shoe Manufacturing . . . . .	116
Chemicals:	
Chemical Manufacturing . . . . .	124
Paint and Varnish Manufacturing . . . . .	134
Paper and Printing:	
Paper and Wood Pulp Manufacturing . . . . .	110
Paper Products Manufacturing . . . . .	136
Book and Job Printing . . . . .	122
Newspaper and Periodical Printing . . . . .	118
Miscellaneous Industries:	
Furniture Manufacturing . . . . .	126
Lumber Manufacturing and Millwork . . . . .	130
Meat Packing . . . . .	132
Rubber Manufacturing . . . . .	138

## LIST OF NUMBERED TABLES AND CHARTS

TABLE	TABLES	PAGE
1.	Calculated Weekly Wages for Selected Occupations, United States and Foreign Countries, as of December, 1926 . . . . .	17
2.	Condensed Data on Wages, Hours and Employment, All Wage Earners, 25 Industries . . . . .	27
3.	Average Hourly Earnings, Composite and Classified Groups of Labor, 25 Industries . . . . .	29
4.	Average Weekly Earnings, Composite and Classified Groups of Labor, 25 Industries . . . . .	30
5.	Index Numbers of Cost of Living and "Real" Hourly and Weekly Earnings, All Wage Earners and Classified Groups, 25 Industries . . . . .	32
6.	Average Hours of Work, 25 Industries . . . . .	33
7.	Average Hourly and Weekly Earnings and Hours of Work, Gas and Electricity Plants, January, 1927 . . . . .	47
8.	Changes in Hourly and Weekly Earnings, July, 1914-January, 1927, Manufacture and Distribution of Gas . . . . .	49
9.	Changes in Hourly and Weekly Earnings, July, 1914-January, 1927, Generation and Distribution of Electricity . . . . .	49
10.	Changes in Average Hours of Work per Wage Earner, July, 1914-January, 1927, Gas and Electricity Plants . . . . .	50
11.	Index Numbers of Cost of Living and "Real" Hourly and Weekly Earnings, All Wage Earners, Gas and Electrical Plants . . . . .	51
12.	Wages of Building Labor, December, 1926 . . . . .	58
13.	Weighted Average Wage Rates per Hour, by Building Trades, Composite for 23 Cities, 1926 . . . . .	59
14.	Average Wage Rates in Building Construction, 23 Cities, by Trades, December, 1920, December, 1925 and December, 1926 . . . . .	60
15.	Weighted Average Wages in Building Construction, by Cities, December, 1926 . . . . .	62
16.	Wages of Farm Labor, 1914-1926 . . . . .	66
17.	Significant Factors in Railroad Operations, 1920-1926 . . . . .	70

x LIST OF NUMBERED TABLES AND CHARTS

TABLE	PAGE
18. Employment, Wages and Hours, All Wage Earners, Class I Railroads . . . . .	77
19. Employment, Wages and Hours, All Train and Engine Service Labor, Class I Railroads . . . . .	77
20. Employment, Wages and Hours, Skilled Shop Labor, Class I Railroads . . . . .	78
21. Employment, Wages and Hours, Unskilled Labor, Class I Railroads . . . . .	78
22. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Freight Engineers, Class I Railroads . . . . .	79
23. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Passenger Engineers, Class I Railroads . . . . .	79
24. Employment, Wages and Hours, Yard Engineers, Class I Railroads . . . . .	80
25. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Freight Conductors, Class I Railroads . . . . .	80
26. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Passenger Conductors, Class I Railroads . . . . .	81
27. Employment, Wages and Hours, Yard Conductors, Class I Railroads . . . . .	81
28. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Freight Firemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	82
29. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Passenger Firemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	82
30. Employment, Wages and Hours, Yard Firemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	83
31. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Freight Brakemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	83
32. Employment, Wages and Hours, Road Passenger Brakemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	84
33. Employment, Wages and Hours, Yard Brakemen, Class I Railroads . . . . .	84

**LIST OF NUMBERED TABLES AND CHARTS**      xi

<b>CHART</b>	<b>CHARTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1.	Wages, Employment and Industrial Activity, Automobile Manufacturing . . . . .	5
2.	Wages, Employment and Industrial Activity, Paper and Pulp Manufacturing and Iron and Steel Production . . . . .	6
3.	Wages, Employment and Industrial Activity, Boot and Shoe Manufacturing and Meat Packing . . . . .	7
4.	Wages, Employment and Industrial Activity, Rubber Manufacturing and Silk Manufacturing . . . . .	8
5.	Wages, Employment and Industrial Activity, Cotton Manufacturing and Wool Manufacturing . . . . .	9
6.	Wages, Employment and Railroad Activity, Class I Railroads . . . . .	10
7.	Average Hourly Wages, Manufacturing, Railroads and Building Construction, 1914-1926 . . . . .	15
8.	Average Actual Hourly Earnings, All Wage Earners and Classified Groups, 25 Industries . . . . .	28
9.	Average Actual Weekly Earnings, All Wage Earners and Classified Groups, 25 Industries . . . . .	31
10.	Index Numbers of Hourly and Weekly "Money" and "Real" Earnings and Cost of Living, All Wage Earners, 25 Industries . . . . .	35
11.	Index Numbers of Changes in Employment, by Industries . . . . .	38, 39
12.	Prevailing Hours of Work, Manufacturing Industries . . . . .	41
13.	Changes in the Average Nominal Week and Average Week per Wage Earner, 25 Industries . . . . .	42
14.	Index Numbers of Average Hourly and Weekly Earnings, Manufacture and Distribution of Gas . . . . .	45
15.	Index Numbers of Average Hourly and Weekly Earnings, Generation and Distribution of Electricity . . . . .	46
16.	Wages, Costs and Activity in Building Construction . . . . .	54
17.	Wages and Prices in Agriculture and Manufacturing Industries . . . . .	67
18.	Average Hourly Earnings, All Wage Earners and Classified Groups, Class I Railroads . . . . .	71
19.	Average Weekly Earnings, All Wage Earners and Classified Groups, Class I Railroads . . . . .	72
20.	Average Hourly and Weekly Earnings, Skilled Railroad Shop Labor and Skilled Foundry and Machine Shop Labor . . . . .	73, 74
21.	Index Numbers of Hourly and Weekly "Money" and "Real" Earnings and the Cost of Living, All Wage Earners, Class I Railroads . . . . .	75
22.	Indices of Railroad Operating Efficiency and Activity . . . . .	76