

# Seven decades of wage changes

*Abdul Rashid*

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**B**etween 1920 and 1990, the current annual average wage of individuals increased twenty-five-fold, while prices rose seven-fold. Thus, on the average, wage-earners increased their purchasing power by more than three and a half times over these 70 years. These gains were not obtained at a uniform rate over the entire period, however. During the first two decades, the changes in real wages were quite small, while the next 30 years saw large gains. The rate of growth in real wages began to decline in the 1970s, the smallest increase since 1920 occurring between 1980 and 1990.

The economic welfare of families and households in a community depends largely on the number and quality of paying jobs. Around 70% of the national income is accounted for by labour income. Wages, therefore, are the linchpin of Canadians' economic welfare, and there is an understandable interest in both the level of wages at various times and changes over time.

Based on the information collected in the censuses of Canada taken between 1921 and 1991, this article presents selected statistics on the changes in the average wages of men and women between 1920 and 1990. (See [Data sources and concepts](#)). To place these wage trends in perspective, the importance of overall economic activity and the characteristics of wage-earners are discussed before changes in actual and real wages.

The statistics in this article relate to annual wages irrespective of the nature of work activity: whether it was full-year, full-time, or part-year or part-time. For a proper comparison of male-female differences in wages, work activity and other related factors such as age, work experience and occupation must be taken into account. A detailed study of this aspect of wages was beyond the scope of this paper, as was an examination of the inequality of distribution of wages, or of differences in wages by other factors such as age or education or work activity.

## An economy is a living organism

Wage changes are closely related to overall economic activity as well as to changes in the various

constituent parts of the economy. While it is not possible to deal in any detail with the factors influencing the movement of wages over time, the importance of their impact on wages needs to be recognized before the individual wage data from the Canadian censuses are examined.

## Wages move with overall economic activity

An economy, like any living organism, is continuously changing from day to day and year to year. And wages tend to move with overall economic activity. An important measure of overall economic activity is the gross domestic product (GDP) which is the total value of goods and services produced. Periods of economic growth are generally accompanied by growth in wages, while wages tend to stagnate or fall during periods of recession.

An examination of annual changes in per capita GDP and per capita wages in constant (1990) dollars between 1926 and 1990 shows an obvious link between wages and overall economic activity ([Chart A](#)). Although the long-term trend is clearly for growth in the GDP (and therefore in wages), it is subject to both minor and major fluctuations. In fact, in 13 of the 65 years, per capita GDP fell from the preceding year. The phenomenon of continuous change is highlighted when the percentage variations from year to year are examined. No two years show identical rates of change. These year-to-year fluctuations lie within certain movements of longer duration. Conspicuous in this respect are the trough resulting from the Great Depression and the peak generated by the Second World War.



### Chart A **Fluctuations in real wages reflect changes in GDP and employment.**

*Source: National Accounts and Environment Division*

*Note: Employment rate = employment/labour force*

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These data also show that wage changes generally lag behind changes in overall economic activity. Moreover, the period required for the recovery of wages is generally longer than the actual duration of a depression or recession.

Another measure of economic activity is the overall level of employment. High rates of unemployment tend to exert downward pressure on wages, while a robust economy with high levels of employment maintains or augments the level of wages ([Chart A](#)).

The analysis of changes in individual wages at 10-year intervals is likely to smooth over many of the year-to-year variations taking place between censuses or within each decade. Census wage data relate to

one year in a decade. <sup>(1)</sup> If a reference year contained an extraordinary economic event (the trough of a severe recession, for example), the changes between that year and the preceding and succeeding reference years will be exaggerated.

## Growth in wages and productivity converge

In the long run, growth in real wages can only be sustained if it is accompanied by growth in productivity. ([Statistics Canada](#), 1992b). The level of productivity in Canada is probably as high as in most industrial nations but the rate of growth in productivity has not been uniform. The 1920s and 1930s were decades of zero growth. The war and the post-war period extending to the early 1970s saw rapid increases in labour productivity. The ratio of capital to labour in the primary industries increased rapidly with tremendous increases in productivity, while technological changes in other sectors led to more efficient use of resources and increased productivity. And the rising levels of education produced a higher quality workforce with higher productivity.

These factors changed in the 1970s. The shift of labour from the primary sector, especially from agricultural industries, levelled off. Although the educational level of the workforce continued to rise, there was a large influx of inexperienced labour due to the entry of the baby boom cohorts and married women. From a high of 3.3% during the 1961 to 1975 period, the average annual labour productivity gains dropped to 1.5% during the 1975 to 1982 business cycle and to 1.4% during the 1982-1991 cycle ([Galarneau and Dumas](#), 1993). The declining rate of growth in labour productivity in recent years has had a depressing effect on real wages.

## Wages change as characteristics of wage-earners change

An individual's wage is generally related to certain characteristics such as age, education and occupation. Given the wage rate, the annual earnings of an individual will depend on the number of weeks worked in the year and on whether this work was full- or part-time. Modifications in the characteristics of paid workers over time result in wage changes. If the relative proportion of wage-earners in a high-wage category increases or decreases, the overall average wage would also increase or decrease even if there were no changes in individual wages.

During the 70 years reviewed, not only did the number of wage-earners increase substantially, but their distribution by sex also changed. Beginning at 21% in 1920, the proportion of female wage-earners increased over the years, reaching near parity with men in 1990. These changes in composition and quantity were accompanied by qualitative changes brought about by rising levels of education. There have also been important shifts in the occupational and industrial structures. Between 1951 and 1991, a quarter of the labour force moved away from primary, manufacturing and transportation to other industries.

## Changes in average annual wage

In 1920, the average annual wage in current dollars was estimated at \$960. [\(2\)](#) The Great Depression, which began in 1929, reduced the average by 11%, to \$850 in 1930, and it remained at about this level until 1940. Demands of a war economy and post-war economic expansion, coupled with inflation, saw current wages experience sharp increases in every decade. Thus, between 1940 and 1950, the average annual wage more than doubled to \$1,900. It tripled in the next two decades to \$5,700 in 1970 and more than quadrupled in the next two to about \$24,300 in 1990. Both men and women experienced such increases in their average annual wages during this period ([Table 1](#)).



## Table 1 Average annual wage by sex, 1920-1990

Source: *Census of Canada*

The twenty-five-fold increase in the current or nominal average annual wage between 1920 and 1990 did not result in an equal increase in the purchasing power of wage-earners since the prices of goods and services also rose nearly seven-fold. Consequently, the real average annual wage increased 3.6 times during the period under review.

Although current or nominal wages are of interest, changes in real or constant dollar wages provide a more important indication of the financial position of wage-earners in the long run. Accordingly, all wage statistics in the following analysis, unless otherwise stated, have been adjusted for price changes and are presented in 1990 dollars.

### On the eve of the Great Depression (1920-1930)

In 1920, the average annual wage was \$6,800. Nearly four-fifths of all wage-earners were men with an average wage of \$7,500. The wages of women averaged \$4,100 ([Chart B](#)).



## Chart B Real wages quadrupled between 1920 and 1990 for both women and men.

Source: *Census of Canada*

National Accounts data show that overall economic activity began to slide in 1929, with the advent of the

Great Depression ([Chart A](#)). Unemployment began to rise sharply. By the end of the decade, the average number of weeks worked by male wage-earners had dropped by 12% and those worked by female wage-earners, by 3%. The effect of this reduced work was reflected in a proportionate reduction in current or nominal wages in 1930 compared with 1920.

During this decade, the prices of goods and services fell faster than wages. Consequently, real wages increased. Men gained about 10% and women 23%, with their respective average annual wages increasing to \$8,300 and \$5,000 in 1930. The overall real average annual wage increased by 12% to \$7,600.

This increase in real wages results from the higher purchasing power of the dollar in 1930 compared with 1920. It should not, however, be interpreted as an increase in the overall purchasing power of Canadians. From a peak of 57% in 1928, the ratio of employed persons to the total civilian, non-institutional population 14 years and over began to slip and had fallen to 53% in 1930. (Statistics Canada, [1992a](#) and [1988c](#)). Although the overall average annual wage increased by 12% between 1920 and 1930 in real terms, the higher rate of unemployment actually reduced the proportion of individuals and families who could benefit from the dollar's higher purchasing power.

## Wages recover slowly (1930-1940)

The economic losses in terms of employment and income were catastrophic during the Great Depression. Between 1929 and 1933, the GDP dropped by 42% in current dollars and 27% in constant dollars. Although the depression bottomed out in 1934, it took a world war for the economy to return to its pre-depression level.

The overall productive activity began to improve in 1934 but remained erratic. In fact, the recovery seemed to stall in 1938 when the GDP increased less than 1% over the previous year. Similarly, the average annual unemployment rate peaked at 19.3% in 1933, dropped to 9.1% by 1937, and rose again to 11.4% in the next two years. The unemployment rate averaged 9.2% in 1940.

The real average annual wage of men increased by 16% between 1930 and 1940 to \$9,600. Women, however, suffered a drop of 6%, with an average annual wage of \$4,700 in 1940. Because of this reduction for women, the overall average annual wage at \$8,400 was larger by only 10% in 1940 than it was in 1930. This was the only decade when the real wages of women fell.

Two factors may have been responsible for the opposite trends in the wages of men and women. Firstly, the Second World War brought to a halt the normal growth in the civilian labour force with the enlistment of men in the Armed Forces. [\(3\)](#) The number of male wage-earners in 1940 was only 7% higher than in 1930, but the number of female wage-earners had increased by 33%. Most women joined the workforce to support the war effort. Men worked, on average, the same number of weeks in 1940 and 1930, but the average number of weeks women worked was 13% lower. Secondly, it is also possible that

the long-term impact of the Great Depression was more severe for female wage-earners than for males, especially since, by 1940, many men who might otherwise have been unemployed had already joined the Armed Forces.

## **Wages begin to grow with war and post-war economy (1940-1950)**

The size of the civilian labour force began to shrink with the advent of the Second World War, while the demand for labour started to increase. Compared with 1939, there were about 42,000 fewer persons in the labour force in 1940. (4) Thereafter, the size of the civilian labour force did not increase until after the war in 1946. The war kept the economy in a high gear but its end caused a temporary slowdown in economic activity in 1945 and 1946. Then, in 1947, the economy bounced back strongly. As a result, the unemployment rate throughout the decade was very low.

Both men and women gained in wages. Between 1940 and 1950, the average annual wage of men increased by 34% to \$12,800 and that of women by 56% to \$7,400. (5) The proportion of female wage-earners was quite small so that, although the increase in their real wage was 1.6 times that of men, it had an insignificant impact on the overall real average annual wage, which increased by 34% to \$11,200 in 1950.

## **The decade of largest gains (1950-1960)**

The labour force continued to expand between 1950 and 1960 but the overall momentum of the post-war economic activity could not be sustained. Unemployment during the early 1950s was quite low, but rose to about 7% in the later years.

The Great Depression and the Second World War had also brought about certain far-reaching shifts in industrial and occupational structures. The 1951 Census showed, for the first time, a reduction in the number of persons engaged in agriculture and resource-based industries (Ostry, 1967). The largest expansion was in clerical occupations. It began after the war and its primary impact was on women. Compared with 19% in 1921, 29% of the female labour force was in clerical occupations in 1961. The proportion of men increased and that of women decreased by 8 percentage points in manufacturing and mechanical occupations. Women were concentrated in the service and clerical occupations.

These trends continued after 1961. The proportion of men in farming occupations continued to fall, to less than 6% of the male labour force in 1991, while their proportion in the managerial occupations more than doubled between 1961 and 1991 to 10%. In the case of women in the labour force, their proportion in product fabricating continued to drop steadily over the years to stand at 3% in 1991, while their proportion in clerical occupations fell to 30% from a peak of 35% in 1981. The growth of women's share in the managerial occupations paralleled that of men, rising from only 1% in 1961 to nearly 8% of the female labour force in 1991.

Wages of both men and women increased substantially. The inflationary pressure of the post-war years subsided during the 1950s. Perhaps the pent-up demand of the war years had been satisfied by the end of the 1940s. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by only about 6 points between 1950 and 1960. Consequently, of the decades studied, the 1950s saw the largest gains in real wages. The overall average annual wage increased by 43% to \$16,000 in 1960. The average annual wage of men rose by 44%, from \$12,800 in 1950 to nearly \$18,500 in 1960, and that of women by 36% from \$7,400 to \$10,000.

The difference in wage increases of men and women might have resulted from two factors. On the one hand, the number of female wage-earners increased by 48% between 1950 and 1960. There was very little structural shift during the decade in the occupational distribution of the female labour force. Thus, the women joining the ranks of wage-earners in the 1950s most probably started at the lower end of the wage scale in generally low-paying occupations and depressed the overall average wage of women. On the other hand, although the increase in the number of male wage-earners was smaller (25%) than that of women, substantial changes occurred in the occupational distribution of the male labour force. There was a significant shift from low-paying, primarily agricultural, occupations to higher paying, mostly professional and technical jobs ([Ostry, 1967](#)). Furthermore, men might also have benefitted by moving to higher paying jobs as a result of training and education following their post-war demobilisation. [\(6\)](#)

## Over a million women join the workforce (1960-1970)

The trends observed in the 1950s continued into the 1960s. The pace of economic activity was robust with an annual growth rate of 5% in real terms in the GDP. The employment situation was also quite good with the unemployment rate fluctuating between 3.6% and 7.1% between 1960 and 1970. This decade contained "probably the longest uninterrupted expansion - and certainly the longest peacetime expansion - in Canadian business cycle history" ([Economic Council of Canada, 1967](#)).

Over the entire period from 1920 to 1990, many changes also took place in the educational attainment of Canadians. More than half (52%) of the population 15 years and over had less than a grade 9 education in 1951 ([Statistics Canada, 1989](#)). This proportion dropped sharply with every passing decade; only 14% had less than a grade 9 education in 1991 ([Chart C](#)). At the other end of the spectrum, less than 2% of all persons had a university degree in 1951. This proportion increased to 5% in 1971 and to 11% in 1991. [\(7\)](#) Another notable development has been the changing sex composition of university degree holders. In 1951, 73% of them were men; by 1991, the percentage had been reduced to 55%.



### Chart C

**The level of education in Canada has been rising continuously over the years.**

Source:

*Census of Canada*

The 1960s brought wage-earners gains in real wages similar to those in the previous decade. The average annual wage of men increased by 42%, from \$18,500 in 1960 to \$26,200 in 1970, and that of women increased by 36% from \$10,000 to \$13,700. The overall increase in the average wage in this decade (37%) was lower, however, than in the previous decade (43%). This was, at least in part, the result of the addition of over a million female wage-earners between 1960 and 1970.

## **Inflation keeps real wage gains low (1970-1980)**

Perhaps the most noteworthy development occurring between 1920 and 1990 was the continuing change in the composition of wage-earners by sex ([Chart D](#)). Throughout the period, the rate of female labour force growth exceeded that of men. In 1920, 8 of 10 wage-earners were men. By 1960, this proportion had declined to a ratio of 7 in 10. During the 1960s, over 2.2 million additional persons became wage-earners (nearly half of whom were women) and, for the first time, women accounted for more than one-third of them.



### **Chart D Since the 1960s, the number of female wage-earners has increased dramatically.**

*Source: Census of Canada*

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The 1970s saw the largest increase in the number of wage-earners—an influx of 4.2 million. For women, the increase was even more spectacular than in the 1960s, as their number jumped from 2.5 million in 1970 to 4.4 million in 1980. By 1990, only a little over half (54%) of all wage-earners were men.

Inflation also galloped forward in the 1970s. The CPI more than doubled, from 41.0 in 1970 to 88.9 in 1980. In other words, what a wage-earner could buy for \$1.00 in 1970 required \$2.17 in 1980. Thus, the 135% increase in the current average annual wage between 1970 and 1980, although the highest in any decade in this century, amounted to a less than 9% increase in real terms ([Chart E](#)).



### **Chart E The rate of growth in real wages reached a peak in the 1960s and has since been falling.**

*Source: Census of Canada and Consumer Price Index*

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Between 1970 and 1980, the real average annual wage of men increased by 14%, from \$26,200 in 1970 to \$29,900 in 1980, and that of women by 15% from \$13,700 to \$15,700. Although both men and women gained about equally, the overall increase in real wages was, as noted, less than 9%. This paradox of an overall change being less than the changes in its component parts resulted from the change in the sex composition of wage-earners. The proportion of female wage-earners increased from 34% to 43% between 1970 and 1980. Since women on the whole had lower wages, their increased proportion among all wage-earners depressed overall the average wage.

## **Wages stagnate (1980-1990)**

The final decade in the period studied began and ended with recessions. The 1980s experienced the highest rates of unemployment since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The rate of increase in the number of wage-earners dropped from 57% in the 1970s to 18% between 1980 and 1990. Of the 2 million persons who joined the ranks of wage-earners during the decade, 1.4 million (66%) were women.

The inflationary pressure of the 1970s continued into the 1980s. It began to subside in 1983 but developed fresh steam in 1986. Between 1980 and 1990, the CPI rose by 78%. As a result, any nominal increases in wages were almost entirely consumed by higher prices. The overall real average wage rose by only 2% between 1980 and 1990.

For the first time, the real average annual wage of men fell from \$29,900 in 1980 to \$29,800 in 1990. But, notwithstanding the large increase in the number of female wage-earners, the average annual wage of women increased by 14% to \$17,900 in 1990. Part of this rise may be due to an increase in the proportion of women with higher levels of education and more work experience moving into better paying jobs. It would appear that the continuing attachment of women to the labour force had finally started to pay dividends. (8)

## **Conclusion**

From 1920 to 1990, Canada experienced, on the one hand, the turmoils of the Great Depression and the Second World War and, on the other, long periods of economic expansion and prosperity. Most important of all was the achievement of a high standard of living along with a comprehensive social security system. The growth in real wages was the primary source of these positive developments. These changes were accompanied by important and far-reaching changes in Canada's industrial and occupational structures, in the sex composition of the labour force and in the educational profile of the population.

Over the 70 years, both male and female wage-earners quadrupled their purchasing power through increases in their wages (4 and 4.4 times, respectively). The overall increase in the average annual wage was, however, somewhat lower (3.6 times) because of the spectacular increase in the proportion of

female wage-earners who have generally lower wages.

The overall average wage of women remained significantly lower than that of men. There was very little change in the female-to-male wage ratio during most of the period reviewed. The 1991 Census data, however, indicate a significant improvement in the last decade with the overall female-to-male wage ratio increasing from 52.6% in 1980 to 60.3% in 1990.

In the first half of the period reviewed, most families had only one earner, generally the husband. After the Second World War, first, rising individual wages and then, the increasingly common phenomenon of families with two wage-earners were the main sources of the rising standard of living.

Economic "growth was the major force behind poverty reduction in the 1950s and 1960s. The force was, more precisely, the growth of real wages, which allowed low-income workers to make progress vis-à-vis the poverty line" ([Levy](#), 1988). An examination of wage trends reveals that rising wages coincided with the productive activity needed to satisfy pent-up demand from war (and depression) years for housing and durable goods and changing demography through marriages and the baby boom. The increase in both the quantity and quality of labour and shifts in occupational and industrial structures brought about by technological advances were other positive factors leading to a rise in real wages.

Rapid increases in real wages in the three decades after the war gave rise to expectations of an automatic rise in real wages. However, unsustainable rates of increase in the labour force, demands for higher wages to combat sharp increases in the cost of living leading to a vicious wage-price spiral, a reduction in labour productivity and an increasing debt burden were strong negative pressures that halted, or at least suspended, the growth in real wages during the 1980s.

The 1990s have already introduced new factors which will have an impact on wages. An important new development consists of the removal of trade barriers and, at the same time, the formation of large regional trading blocs. "Periods of sustained economic growth and prosperity in Canada have historically and almost invariably been associated with dynamically expanding exports and imports" ([Economic Council of Canada](#), 1964). This statement, made 30 years ago by the Economic Council of Canada in its First Annual Review, is equally relevant today when nearly one-third of our gross national product is accounted for by international trade. But the decline in productivity growth during the last 15 years threatens our competitive position.

The rate of increase in the labour force has moderated considerably compared with the 1960s and 1970s. A major segment of the labour force consisting mostly of women and baby boomers has become better trained and more experienced. Rising levels of education should improve both the quality and productivity of labour. These factors suggest the potential for a resumption of growth in real wages, albeit unlikely at the extraordinary pace of the 1950s and 1960s.

# Data sources and concepts

For detailed definitions of concepts, methods and coverage, see the sources listed under [References](#).

**Historical comparability** - For an analysis of changes over time, it is important that the concepts, methods and coverage underlying the statistics be identical. In practice, this is not possible for a series extending over a long period. Statistics Canada is always conscious of the need for historically comparable data, but the many social, legal and technological changes that occur over time cannot be ignored. Therefore, the statistics presented in this article are based on concepts and coverage that have undergone change from time to time. However, it is assumed that such change does not significantly reduce the accuracy of the general trend in annual wages over a 70-year period.

**Wages** - All statistics on individual wages and those relating to wage-earners in this article are based on data from the various censuses of Canada. The following points should be noted:

- Prior to the 1971 Census, wage data covered the 12 months preceding the census. Since 1971, wages are for the calendar year preceding the census. For convenience, however, reference years have been labelled 1920, 1930, and so on.
- Except for 1950, the averages represent the arithmetic means. For 1950, only median values are available. However, unlike the data for recent years, the 1940 and 1960 data show insignificant differences between median and mean wages.
- Averages are calculated for those who reported wages.
- The 1921, 1931 and 1941 Censuses cover the "gainfully employed"; 1951, 1961 and 1971 cover "currently in labour force." The 1981 and later censuses cover "paid workers."
- Data from censuses before 1951 exclude Newfoundland, Yukon and Northwest Territories.
- The 1931 Census data are for individuals 16 years and over; the 1941 and 1951, for 14 years and over, while the rest cover individuals 15 years and over. The 1941 Census excluded persons on active military service. The 1991 Census included, for the first time, both permanent and non-permanent residents. Non-permanent residents are persons who hold student or employment authorizations, Minister's permits or who are refugee claimants.

**Current and constant dollars** - The purchasing power of a dollar decreases or increases when prices rise or fall. To account for price changes over time, current or nominal wages are converted into constant dollar or real wages by adjusting for changes in the prices of goods and services. In this article, real wages are expressed in terms of constant (1990) dollars by adjusting them for changes in the Consumer Price Index (1981=100) between 1920 and 1990. Since the 1921 to 1961 censuses collected wage data for the 12 months preceding the census, adjustments to current wages from these censuses were made on the basis of changes in the Consumer Price Index in the last seven months of the preceding year and five months of the census year. For real changes in gross domestic product and related statistics, the Implicit Price Index (1986=100) was used.

**Labour force** - All statistics relating to labour force, employment and unemployment are taken from the National Income and Expenditure Accounts, annual estimates, going back to 1926. For detailed definitions, users should consult Statistics Canada ([1992a](#), [1992c](#) and [1988c](#)).

**Occupation, industry and education** - Statistics on distributions by occupation, industry and education are from various censuses of Canada (see [References](#)).

**National income** - All statistics relating to gross domestic product and per capita wages are taken from Statistics Canada ([1992a](#) and [1988c](#)).

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## Notes

### *Note 1*

Beginning with 1971, information on the annual wages of individuals is available from the Survey of Consumer Finances.

### *Note 2*

Wage data from the 1921 to 1961 Censuses relate to the 12 months preceding the census (see [Data sources and concepts](#)).

### *Note 3*

The 1941 Census excluded persons on active military service.

### *Note 4*

In 1939, the Canadian Armed Forces consisted of 7,945 persons. Their strength increased to 92,296 in 1940 and 260,553 in 1941. It reached a peak in 1945 at 761,041 persons. Post-war demobilization brought the number down to 47,185 in 1950 ([Colombo](#), 1992).

### *Note 5*

The rate of increase in the average wage of women between 1940 and 1950 is somewhat misleading considering the atypical drop in their wages between 1930 and 1940.

### *Note 6*

The immediate post-war period saw an increase in the number of men entering universities and colleges. In 1945, these institutions had awarded degrees to 7,200 men ([Statistics Canada](#), 1978). In 1950, the

number of degrees awarded to men more than doubled to 14,900.

### **Note 7**

The composition of the group with educational levels between grade 8 and a university degree also changed. Compared with a little over one-fourth in 1971, nearly two-fifths of this group had some postsecondary education in 1991.

### **Note 8**

This was also the decade when some important legislation covering employment equity was put in place.

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## Author

Abdul Rashid is with the Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division of Statistics Canada.

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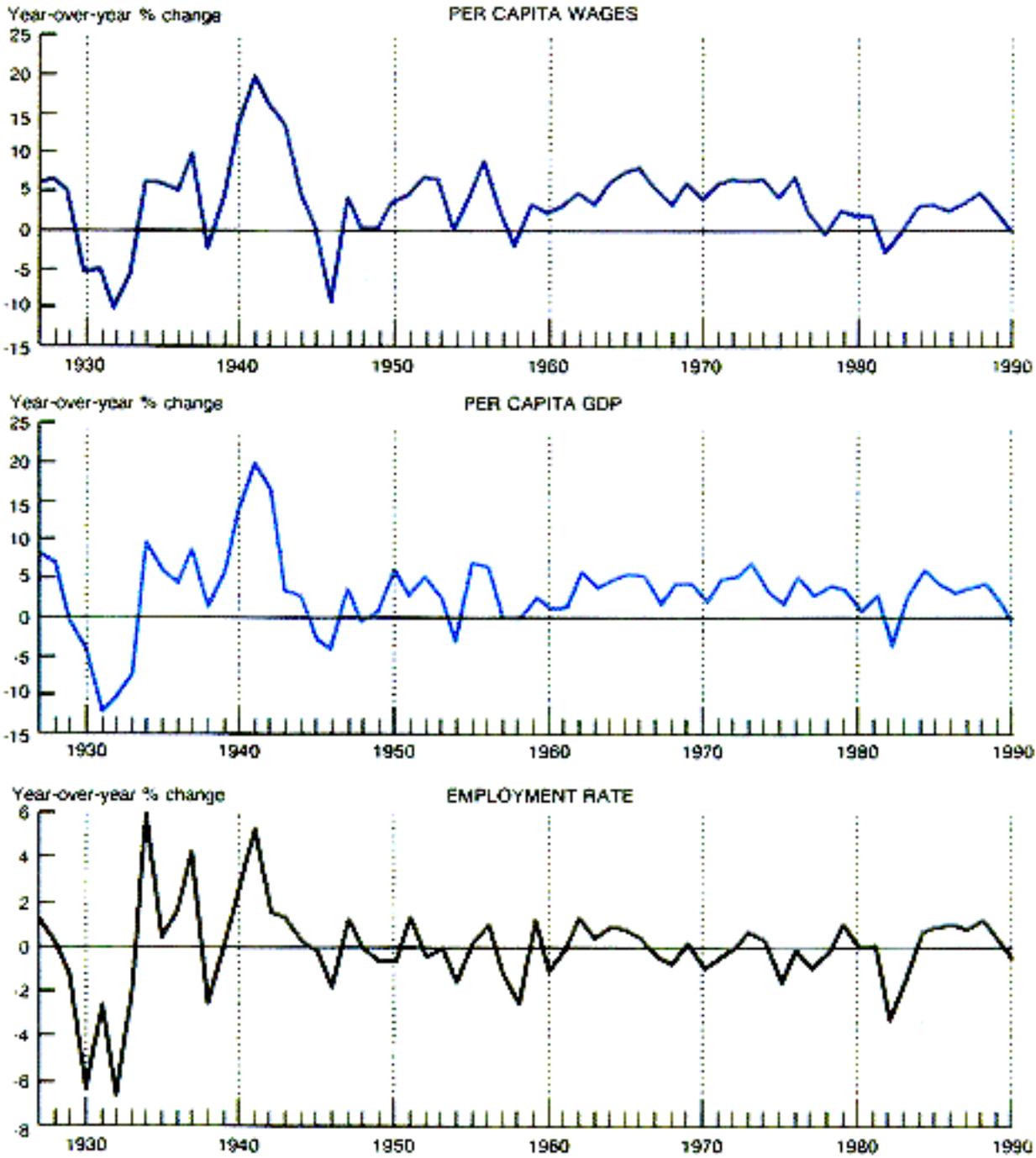
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Chart A

**Fluctuations in real wages reflect changes in GDP and employment.**



Source: National Accounts and Environment Division  
Note: Employment rate = employment / labour force

Table 1

**Average annual wage by sex, 1920-1990**

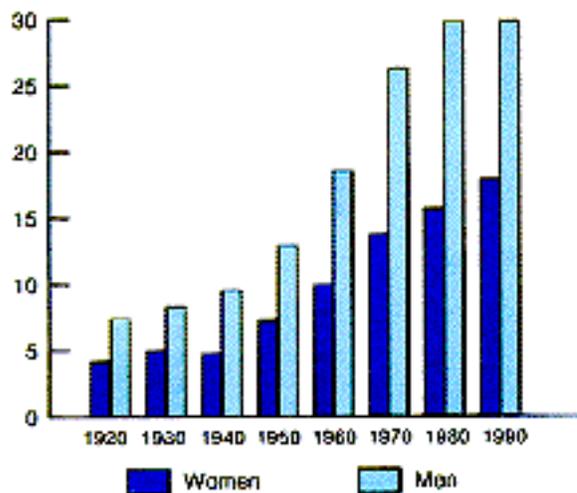
	Current dollars			Constant (1990) dollars		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
	Average wage (\$)					
1920	959	1,062	577	6,773	7,500	4,075
1930	854	931	564	7,590	8,274	5,013
1940	868	993	490	8,370	9,579	4,726
1950	1,863	2,127	1,221	11,249	12,843	7,373
1960	3,192	3,679	1,995	16,031	18,477	10,019
1970	5,683	6,789	3,543	21,928	26,196	13,671
1980	13,369	16,786	8,828	23,791	29,871	15,710
1990	24,259	29,757	17,933	24,259	29,757	17,933
	% change					
1920-30	-10.9	-12.3	-2.3	12.1	10.3	23.0
1930-40	1.6	6.7	-13.1	10.3	15.8	-5.7
1940-50	114.7	114.2	149.2	34.4	34.1	56.0
1950-60	71.3	73.0	63.4	42.5	43.9	35.9
1960-70	78.0	84.5	77.6	36.8	41.8	36.4
1970-80	135.2	147.3	149.2	8.5	14.0	14.9
1980-90	81.5	77.3	103.1	2.0	-0.4	14.2

Sources: *Census of Canada*

Chart B

**Real wages quadrupled between 1920 and 1990 for both women and men.**

1990 \$, in thousands

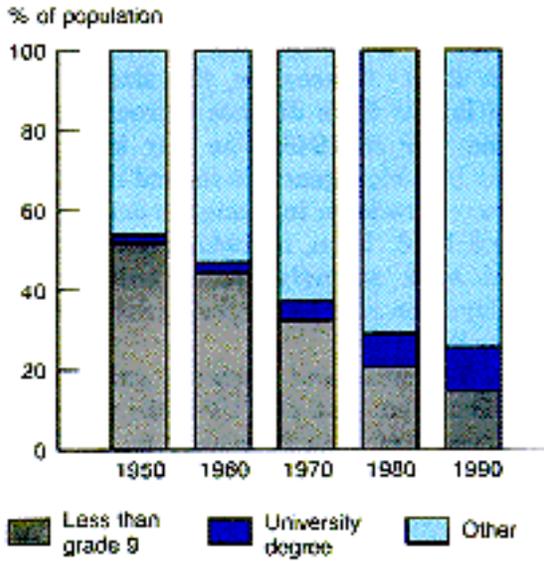


Source: Census of Canada

**Chart C**

**The level of education in Canada has been rising continuously over the years.**

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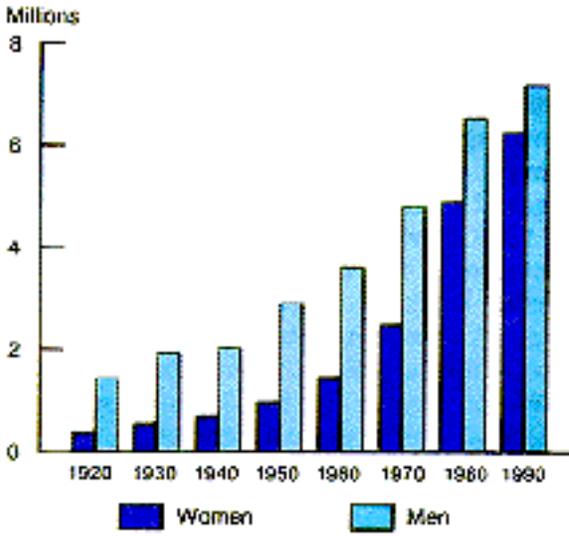
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Source: *Census of Canada*

Chart D

Since the 1960s, the number of female wage-earners has increased dramatically.

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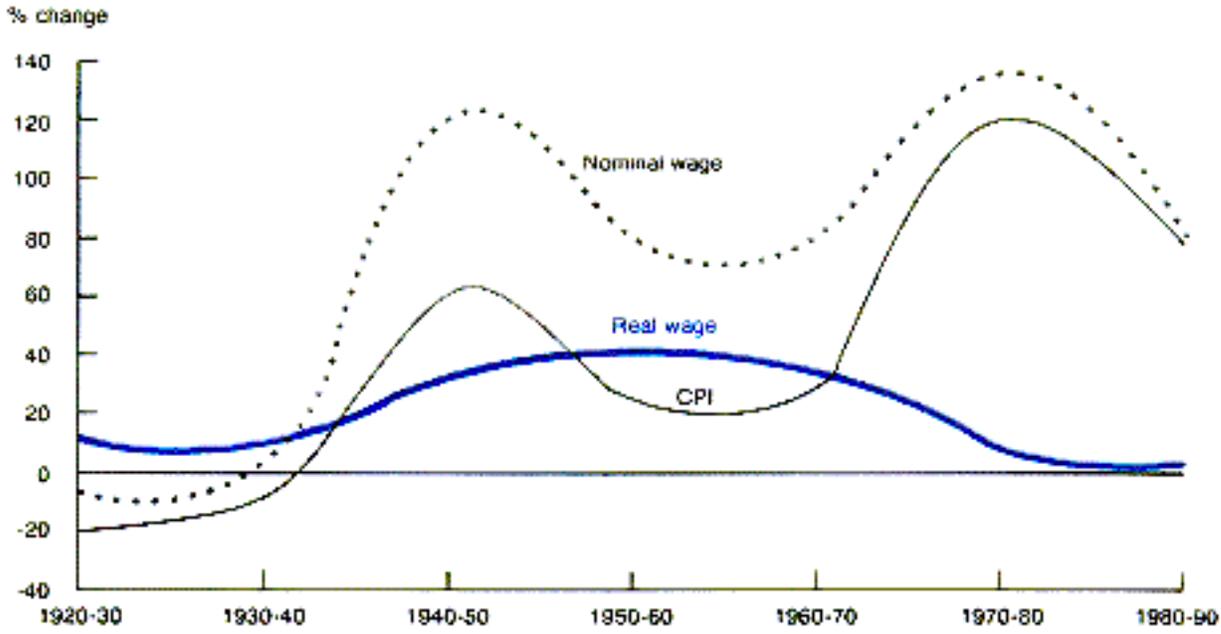


Source: Census of Canada

Chart E

The rate of growth in real wages reached a peak in the 1960s and has since been falling.

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Sources: Census of Canada and Consumer Price Index

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