

Unionized workers

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Trade unionism in North America appears to be in decline. For example, in the United States, union density (the percentage of paid workers who are unionized) has fallen sharply, down from 23% in 1980 to 16% in 1990 (Riddell, 1993), while in Canada it has stagnated, ranging between 31% and 33%. Both countries have seen a shift in employment from the goods-producing sector, where unions are well established, to the service sector, where they are still experiencing some recruitment problems. This shift has created downward pressures on union density in both countries; the Canadian rate has not declined only because of the large number of unionized workers in the public sector.

Behind the apparent stability in union density in Canada lie a number of changes in the demographic and labour market characteristics of unionized workers. And while these changes in part reflect those undergone by the labour force as a whole, they are sometimes more pronounced among unionized workers. For example, women are participating in greater numbers in the labour market, but it is among unionized workers that their numbers have increased most; while the labour force in general is aging, this phenomenon is more pronounced among unionized workers; and while the decline of employment in manufacturing has affected many workers, unionized workers have been hit harder.

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With a brief historical review of the Canadian union movement, this article examines the stagnation of union density using data from the survey conducted under the *Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act* (CALURA). It also looks at changes over time in the characteristics of unionized workers and compares these with their non-unionized counterparts; this information is drawn from a data source that has been rarely used, namely, household surveys (see *Two sources of data on unionized workers*). In addition to providing information on unionized workers' demographic characteristics, this source can be used to examine variables that are seldom available, such as seniority, hours of work, paid overtime and wages.

The history of unionization in Canada

The Canadian trade union movement grew out of the industrialization of the economy early last century. The growing workforce in the industrial sector as well as the increased concentration of businesses in the sector led workers to organize, as they increasingly found themselves performing comparable tasks. Specialized workers were the first to organize against the threat of mechanization. The year 1886 saw the birth of the American Federation of Labor and its Canadian counterpart, the Trade and Labour Congress of Canada. In 1902, Canadian nationalists founded the Canadian Federation of Labour, in reaction to the massive American influence.

Despite these movements, it was not until the 1920s that these groups began to have an influence on working conditions and real income of members (Rea, 1991).

These developments were temporarily stalled by the Great Depression of the 1930s after which union membership practically quadrupled (from 1940 to 1956). At the same time, different branches of the Canadian union movement united, a development that encouraged governments to adopt pro-labour legislation and that helped to strengthen the influence and prestige of the labour movement.

After 1956, union membership increased more slowly, owing to a decline in the pool of semi-skilled workers, the group most inclined to unionize, and a rise in the number of white-collar workers, less inclined to organize. The expansion of the federal public service, various provincial civil services and certain industries that had traditionally been highly unionized (including the automobile industry) contributed to a moderate increase in union membership by the mid-1960s (Eaton, 1976).²

From 1966 to 1993, union membership doubled, although union density changed only slightly, ranging between 31% and 33% (Table 1). Nearly two-thirds of the total growth in employment during this period (5.5 million) was among non-unionized workers, who increased their numbers by 3.6 million. Nevertheless, union membership among women quintupled, while the percentage of women who were unionized almost doubled, rising from 16% to nearly 30%. Men saw their unionization rate fall slightly, from 38% to 35%, while their numbers increased by just 39%.

Two sources of data on unionized workers

CALURA has long been the only major source of data on unionized workers. However, this source provides little information on the demographic and labour market characteristics of these workers. This study created a series on unionized workers based on two household surveys (HS) that over the past 10 years have collected information on both employment and union membership: the Survey of Union Membership of 1984 and the Labour Market Activity Survey from 1986 to 1990.

In these two surveys, union membership was determined according to responses to the following two questions:

1. *In connection with your job, were you a member of a union or other group that bargained collectively with your employer?*
2. *Although you were not a member of a union, were your wages covered by a collective agreement negotiated by a union or other group?*

With these two questions, it is possible to calculate two rates, one based on the first question only and the other based on both. In the latter case, what is calculated is a rate of coverage by a collective agreement, as opposed to union density (unionization rate). The two rates reflect a distinction that exists in the labour world: all union members are covered by a collective agreement, but not all workers covered by a collective agreement are

members of a union. The coverage rate is usually 4 to 5 percentage points higher than the union density obtained from household surveys.

Union density according to CALURA and household surveys (HS) and coverage rate according to HS

	Union density		Coverage rate
	CALURA *	HS	HS
	%		
1984	34.5	37.9	42.5
1985	33.8
1986	34.1	35.6	40.1
1987	33.3	34.1	38.8
1988	33.7	34.8	39.3
1989	34.1	35.9	40.6
1990	34.7	35.2	39.5

Sources: CALURA, Union Membership Survey and Labour Market Activity Survey

* This rate corresponds to the one based on LFS estimates not reweighted in accordance with the estimates from the 1991 Census. This rate is used only for this table, as the estimates from the HS are also not reweighted.

Union density based on household surveys is always higher than that of CALURA. There are various reasons for this gap including the following:

- These two sources have a slightly different reference period: for CALURA, the reference period is December 31 of each year, whereas for the household surveys it corre-

sponds to the LFS reference period of December for the years 1984 and 1986 to 1990 (usually the week that includes the 15th of the month).

- CALURA is an enumeration of unions with 100 or more members, whereas the household surveys are based on a sample that imposes no limit on the number of members.
- The series based on household surveys restricts the age of paid workers to between 17 and 69 inclusive.¹ For CALURA, there is no such age limit.
- Unemployed persons and pensioners may belong to a union. They are included in the CALURA figures, but because of the definition of paid workers used in the household survey files, they are excluded from this source.
- The denominator used in calculating union density – the number of paid workers – differs depending on the source used. In the case of CALURA, the number of paid workers comes from the Labour Force Survey for December of each year, whereas the HS produce their own counts of paid workers, which do not necessarily correspond to those of the LFS.

This article focuses on union density, since CALURA does not provide data on coverage rates.

Stagnation of union density

The shift of jobs from the goods sector to the service sector is widely considered to be largely responsible for the stagnation of union density.³ From 1976 to 1992 there was a decline in employment in the goods sector (with its proportion of paid workers falling from 32% to 24%) and a decline in union density from 43% to 38% (Table 2).⁴ This decline was largely attributable to the manufacturing industries, whose share of paid workers

fell from 22% to 16%, and whose unionization rate dropped from 43% to 33%.

By contrast, the service sector saw major growth, in terms of both total employment – its share rose from 68% to 76% from 1976 to 1992 – and unionization. Union density in this sector rose from 26% to 32%.⁵ Unions already had a foothold in the public sector, although it was private services⁶ that exhibited the greatest increase in employment; indeed, 62% of the

total increase in the number of paid workers between 1976 and 1992 was attributable to these industries. In 1976, private services had accounted for 33% of paying jobs, compared with 40% in 1992, when union density in those services was still under 10%. By comparison, union density in public administration rose from 69% to 75%.

If union density is stagnating, it is mainly because manufacturing industries are in decline, and new companies are slow to become

Table 1
Union membership and union density by sex

Year	Union membership			Union density *		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
	'000			%		
1966	1,881	1,558	323	30.8	38.4	15.9
1967	2,056	1,654	402	33.2	40.9	18.7
1968	2,142	1,705	438	33.0	40.1	19.5
1969	2,215	1,746	468	33.0	39.6	20.2
1970	2,228	1,714	513	32.6	38.3	21.7
1971	2,319	1,761	557	31.4	36.6	21.6
1972	2,355	1,780	575	31.9	37.9	21.4
1973	2,552	1,917	635	32.6	38.6	22.1
1974	2,645	1,968	676	32.6	38.6	22.4
1975	2,701	1,990	711	31.8	37.0	22.9
1976	2,736	1,986	750	31.2	37.6	22.4
1977	2,785	2,003	781	31.2	37.4	22.6
1978	2,872	2,038	834	30.8	37.0	22.7
1979	2,987	2,101	886	30.8	37.2	22.7
1980	3,048	2,120	928	30.5	36.7	22.9
1981	3,108	2,133	975	31.0	37.5	23.3
1982	2,997	2,016	981	31.3	37.8	24.0
1983	3,335	2,155	1,180	33.5	39.2	27.5
1984	3,381	2,169	1,210	33.2	37.6	27.4
1985	3,435	2,181	1,253	32.5	36.7	27.1
1986	3,551	2,250	1,301	32.7	36.9	27.3
1987	3,614	2,261	1,353	32.0	36.0	27.0
1988	3,717	2,311	1,406	32.1	36.1	27.2
1989	3,826	2,314	1,511	32.5	36.0	28.2
1990	3,841	2,288	1,552	33.1	36.6	29.1
1991	3,825	2,249	1,576	33.4	36.7	29.6
1992	3,803	2,211	1,587	33.2	36.1	29.8
1993	3,768	2,167	1,601	32.6	35.0	29.8

Sources: CALURA and Labour Force Survey

* Union density is the ratio of the number of workers who belong to a union to the number of paid workers.

unionized. Unions are perhaps less suited to the businesses experiencing the greatest job growth, namely, small companies with fairly few employees, consisting largely of women and offering forms of employment that are often atypical (part-time or temporary) (Bélanger and Murray, 1994; Krahn, 1995). The needs and expectations of this new group probably differ from those of the unionized worker of the 1960s and 1970s, who was typically a man working full time in a large manufacturing firm.

Apart from this shift in jobs, stagnation of union density is said to be sometimes due to unions' difficulty in operating in a renewed management system (Trudeau and Veilleux, 1995). Traditional man-

agement at times maintained a climate of confrontation between employers and employees, giving rise to collective agreements that were often rigid; by contrast, renewed management, which is based on mutual trust, tends to encourage employee involvement and co-operation in the company and to make work allocation more flexible, all with a view to better meeting the heightened competition among firms in this era of the global marketplace. The employees of such companies would be less inclined to unionize.

This situation is not universal, however, and there are examples of unionized firms, often motivated by the desire to save jobs, that have managed to adapt (Harrisson and Laplante, 1994).

Unionization by province

Union density varies greatly from one province to another. In 1992, Newfoundland had the highest union density with 53%, followed distantly by Quebec (39%) and British Columbia and Manitoba (36%). Whichever province is considered, employment is concentrated mainly in services, manufacturing and trade. The variation in union density between provinces thus depends on the extent to which these industries are unionized.

Newfoundland, Quebec and British Columbia owe their relatively high union density to their strongly unionized service industries (44%, 44% and 37%, respectively, compared with 34% for Canada as a whole), which accounts for more than a third of all workers in these provinces. Manitoba, on the other hand, derives its high union density from the transportation and communication industries and manufacturing.

Because Alberta's manufacturing and service industries are among the least unionized in Canada (21% and 26%), that province has the lowest union density.

Changing demographic traits of organized labour⁷

The stagnation of union density conceals certain changes in the demographic and labour market characteristics of unionized workers over the short study period (1984 to 1990).

Sex

In 1984, unionized workers were typically men (61%) (Table 3). Six years later, women had increased their presence in the unionized labour force, representing 43% of unionized workers. During this time, women only slightly increased their presence among non-unionized workers, having already in 1984 accounted for nearly half the paid workers in this category.

Table 2
Union density by industry

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
	%								
All industries *	31.2	31.2	30.8	30.8	30.6	31.0	31.3	33.5	33.2
Goods sector	43.4	44.6	41.9	41.4	41.3	41.9	42.5	40.7	36.7
Agriculture	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.1
Other primary industries	43.2	41.0	37.7	34.2	33.0	37.7	33.1	32.0	30.6
Manufacturing industries	43.3	44.2	42.2	42.4	41.6	42.5	42.5	40.2	37.6
Construction	54.1	56.6	52.1	50.3	55.3	51.5	59.4	60.1	45.9
Service sector	25.6	25.3	25.8	26.0	25.9	26.4	27.1	30.8	31.9
Transportation and communication **	49.7	51.0	49.3	48.2	50.9	50.9	51.6	57.0	54.4
Trade	8.1	7.8	7.3	7.9	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.7	9.4
Finance, insurance and real estate	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.6
Services †	21.9	21.5	22.9	22.9	23.3	24.5	25.2	32.4	35.5
Public administration	68.9	66.9	72.0	74.0	65.5	66.3	66.0	69.4	69.3
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	
	%								
All industries *	32.5	32.7	32.0	32.1	32.6	33.1	33.4	33.2	33.2
Goods sector	35.9	37.5	36.1	36.2	36.4	37.4	38.1	37.6	37.6
Agriculture	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6
Other primary industries	30.5	33.5	34.6	31.9	33.2	33.4	35.5	36.0	36.0
Manufacturing industries	36.5	36.8	35.4	35.0	34.6	34.9	34.5	33.4	33.4
Construction	45.8	51.7	48.5	50.0	50.4	56.3	60.7	61.7	61.7
Service sector	31.1	30.9	30.4	30.5	31.2	31.7	31.9	31.8	31.8
Transportation and communication **	51.0	54.2	54.4	53.5	51.0	52.3	52.6	50.6	50.6
Trade	9.5	9.4	9.7	9.9	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.3	11.3
Finance, insurance and real estate	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.7
Services †	34.8	33.4	32.8	32.0	33.2	34.3	34.5	34.0	34.0
Public administration	68.9	72.9	73.1	74.1	76.5	77.0	74.0	74.8	74.8

Sources : CALURA and Labour Force Survey

* Union density for all industries may not be exactly the same as that for Canada as a whole (Table 1). This is because the total for Canada includes some unemployed and retired persons who remain union members even though they are no longer working; the latter are excluded from the figure for all industries.

** Also includes the following industries: electric power systems, water systems, gas distribution systems and waste disposal systems.

† Includes business services, education, health and social services, accommodation, food and beverage services, amusement and recreation services, personal and household services, associations, and other services.

Age

From 1984 to 1990, the average age of unionized workers was 4 years older than that of non-unionized workers. However, the age distribution of the former had changed. For example, the proportion of union members aged 17 to 34 slipped by 7 percentage points (from 44% to 37%), compared with a decline of 5 points (from 58% to 53%) for non-unionized workers (Table 3). This steeper decline may be due in part to seniority rules, which tend

to favour older unionized workers, especially in periods of recession.⁸ Also, the shift of jobs toward service industries meant the creation of non-unionized positions, often filled by young persons.

The rapid growth of the group aged 35 to 54 contributed to the ranks of both unionized and non-unionized workers, the younger of whom were part of the postwar baby boom. This age group contains relatively more unionized

workers than non-unionized, a trait unchanged throughout the study period. Workers aged 55 to 69 also continued to be more numerous among the ranks of the unionized.

Education

The figures for 1990 show a general increase in workers' level of education from 1984. But unionized workers were better educated than their non-unionized counterparts (Chart A). They also tended to fall into the extremes with respect

to educational level: in 1990, 7% of unionized workers had less than nine years of education, while 45% had a postsecondary certificate or a university degree; the corresponding percentages for non-unionized workers were 5% and 38%.

Among unionized workers it was mainly men who accounted for the high percentage with little education, whereas mainly women occupied the higher ranks. This characteristic reflects the distribution of unionized workers by industry: a significant percentage of those with a low educational level (especially men) were in the manufacturing industries and other primary industries, while the more educated (to a greater extent women) were in the service industries (such as education, health and social services) and public administration.

Labour market characteristics

Industry

In 1984, some 86% of unionized workers were concentrated in four out of nine major industry groups: the service industries, the manufacturing industries, public administration, and transportation and communication (Table 4). Union density in each of these industries was also above the Canadian average (Table 2).

By 1990, these various industries taken together still accounted for the same proportion of unionized workers; however, their relative employment size had changed somewhat. Thus the decline in employment in the manufacturing industries reduced that industrial group's share of both unionized and non-unionized employment: this group fell from 25% to 21% and from 18% to 17%, respectively (Table 4). In fact, unionized workers suffered a net loss of 15% (-128,000), whereas non-unionized workers registered a net gain of 4% (41,000) during the period. The share lost by the manufacturing

	1984			1990		
	Total	Unionized	Non-unionized	Total	Unionized	Non-unionized
	'000					
Total	9,156	3,466	5,690	9,994	3,514	6,480
	%					
17 to 24 years	22	11	28	16	8	21
25 to 34 years	31	33	30	31	29	32
35 to 44 years	23	28	20	28	32	25
45 to 54 years	15	18	13	17	21	14
55 to 69 years	9	10	8	9	10	8
	'000					
Men	5,046	2,131	2,915	5,274	2,006	3,268
	%					
17 to 24 years	20	11	27	16	8	21
25 to 34 years	31	31	31	31	28	33
35 to 44 years	24	28	20	27	31	24
45 to 54 years	16	19	13	17	22	13
55 to 69 years	10	11	9	10	11	9
	'000					
Women	4,110	1,335	2,775	4,720	1,508	3,212
	%					
17 to 24 years	24	12	30	17	9	21
25 to 34 years	31	35	29	30	30	30
35 to 44 years	23	29	20	29	33	26
45 to 54 years	14	16	13	17	20	15
55 to 69 years	8	8	7	8	8	8

Sources: Survey of Union Membership and Labour Market Activity Survey

industries was captured by services, which had nearly 500,000 more workers than in 1984. Even though almost three-fourths of this job gain was among non-unionized workers, the share increased most for unionized workers, owing to the decline in the relative size of the manufacturing industries.

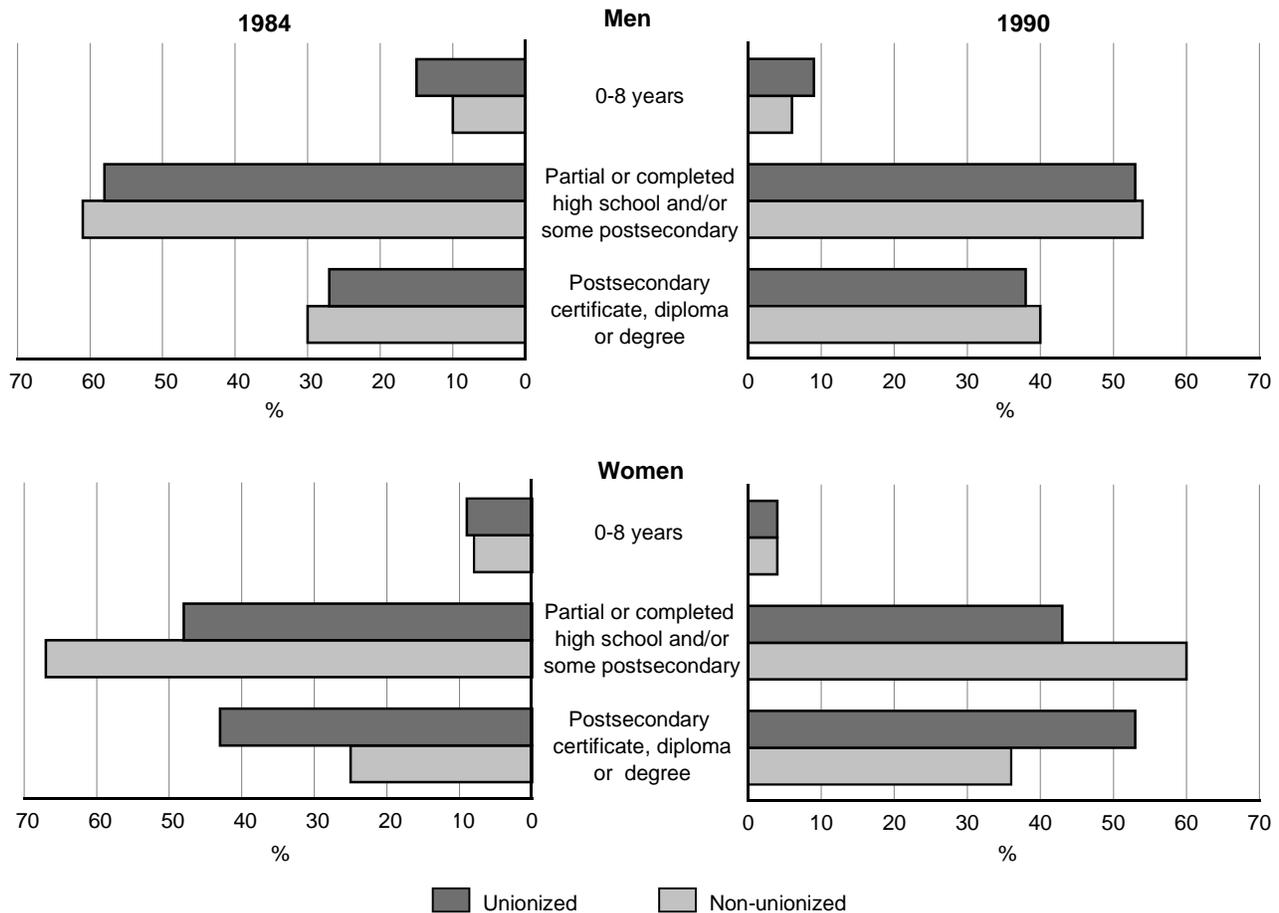
Agriculture, the other primary industries, and finance, insurance and real estate accounted for only a small share of unionized workers in 1984 and 1990 (increasing from 3% to 4% overall during the period). Agriculture and finance, insurance and real estate also registered low union density (Table 2). These industries are somewhat ill-suited to union

organization, since they are largely made up of small firms. In some cases, such as for banks, union membership was not, and is still not, generally part of the corporate culture.

Occupation

In 1984, 60% of unionized workers were in white-collar positions, compared with 76% of non-unionized workers (Chart B). By 1990, the proportion had increased slightly for unionized workers (63%) owing to an increase in management and professional positions, as well as positions related to services, but it remained stable for non-unionized workers. On the other hand, the percentage of unionized workers in blue-collar

Chart A
Unionized women were more likely to be highly educated.



Sources: Survey of Union Membership and Labour Market Activity Survey

positions declined, owing to a decrease in the number of unionized workers in occupations in processing, machining and manufacturing.

Work patterns and usual hours of work

A unionized worker is less likely to be employed part time than a non-unionized worker, although the gap has narrowed considerably over the years. In 1984, some 8% of all unionized workers were employed part time, compared with 19% of non-unionized workers. However, between 1984 and 1990, nearly

two-thirds of the total increase in part-time work was attributable to unionized workers. Consequently, by 1990, the percentage of unionized workers working part time had risen to 12%, probably owing to the increase in union membership among women, whereas it had fallen slightly to 18% among non-unionized workers.

Average usual hours of work per week differ only slightly depending on whether or not a worker belongs to a union. Unionized full-time workers tend to work

fewer hours on average than their non-unionized counterparts (40 hours versus 42), whereas unionized part-time employees work more hours than their non-unionized counterparts (20 hours versus 18).

Seniority

It is no surprise that union members work for longer periods for the same employer than do non-unionized workers. In fact, throughout the study period, even though seniority declined in both groups,⁹ it was nearly twice as high for union-

Table 4
Distribution of workers by union membership and industry

	1984			1990		
	Total	Unionized	Non-unionized	Total	Unionized	Non-unionized
	'000					
All industries	9,156	3,466	5,690	9,994	3,514	6,480
	%					
Goods sector	28	31	26	26	28	25
Agriculture	1	--	1	1	-	2
Other primary industries	3	2	3	2	2	2
Manufacturing industries	21	25	18	18	21	17
Construction	4	4	4	5	5	5
Service sector	72	69	74	74	72	75
Transportation and communication *	8	13	5	8	13	6
Trade	17	6	24	17	6	23
Finance, insurance and real estate	6	1	8	6	2	8
Services **	32	33	32	35	37	33
Public administration	8	15	4	8	15	4

Sources: Survey of Union Membership and Labour Market Activity Survey

* Also includes the following industries: electric power systems, water systems, gas distribution systems and waste disposal systems.

** Includes business services, education, health and social services, accommodation, food and beverage services, amusement and recreational services, personal and household services, associations, and other services.

ized workers (8.8 years compared with 5.0 for non-unionized workers). Seniority was higher among unionized men than among unionized women (9.9 years compared with 7.3), a situation that also applied to non-unionized workers (5.7 and 4.2, respectively).

Beyond the fact that union members are more likely to have better job security, their higher seniority may be due to other factors. For instance, some highly unionized firms have been in existence for many years (such as in manufacturing, transportation, communication and other utilities), which enables their employees to accumulate more years of seniority. In addition, a significant percentage of unionized workers (15%) are employed in the civil service at various levels of government, where until quite recently there was excellent job security.

Remuneration

Wage rates

Throughout the study period, unionized workers maintained a considerable advantage over their non-unionized counterparts in terms of hourly wage rates. Their lead was \$3.33 (in constant 1990 dollars) in 1984 and \$4.06 in 1990 (Table 5).

However, unionization aside, the wage disparity may be due to other factors as well, since unionized workers have certain characteristics that put them at an advantage. For example, as noted earlier, these workers were typically male and slightly older, with more seniority; furthermore, unionization is known to be more common among large firms than among smaller ones (Morissette, 1991) (Chart C). These factors, combined with in-

dustry- and occupation-related differences, also explain the wage disparity.

Among full-time workers, the wage disparity between unionized and non-unionized was greater for women (\$4.39 in 1990) than for men (\$2.67) probably because, as already noted, unionized women are relatively better educated than their non-unionized counterparts, and many are employed in the public sector.

Between 1984 and 1990, the wage disparity between unionized and non-unionized workers widened, both for men and women, whether employed full time or part time.

Furthermore, when unionized workers worked overtime, they more often received premium pay than their non-unionized counterparts: among workers who put in overtime in November 1991, 78% of those who were unionized were entitled to premium pay corresponding to at least one-and-a-half times their hourly wage, compared with 49% of those who were non-unionized.¹⁰

Coverage by retirement plans

Unionized workers were twice as likely to be covered by a retirement plan as were their non-unionized counterparts.

From 1984 to 1990, the percentage of union members covered by a pension plan fluctuated slightly but remained in the range of 77%. Among non-unionized workers, the percentage of employees covered by a pension plan slowly rose, increasing from 30% in 1984 to 33% in 1990.

Summary

Despite a major increase in union membership, union density in Canada has been stagnating for a number of years. This stagnation may be attributed to the shift of jobs from the goods to the service

Chart B
The distribution across occupations of both unionized and non-unionized workers changed little.



Sources: Survey of Union Membership and Labour Market Activity Survey

sector, which would have led to a decline in the unionization rate had it not been offset by the increase in the number of unionized workers in the public sector.

Since 1984, the profile of the typical unionized worker has undergone changes similar to those of the average Canadian worker. For example, in 1984, unionized workers were more typically men, but in 1990 women's share had risen. Their education level increased, as it did for the labour force as a whole, although in the

case of women the education gap widened between unionized and non-unionized workers. Unionized workers were more likely to work in the manufacturing industries in 1984, whereas in 1990 they were more likely to be employed in service industries and to hold a management position or practise a profession.

Certain characteristics of unionized workers and their non-unionized counterparts changed little between 1984 and 1990. Unionized workers were still less likely

than the non-unionized to be employed part time; their hours of work were comparable in number to those of non-unionized workers, and they worked for a longer period for the same employer than did non-unionized workers. The wage disparity between the two groups remained substantial throughout the study period but was not attributable solely to union membership. Among workers putting in overtime, the unionized were still more likely than the non-unionized to receive premium pay for the extra

**Table 5
Average wage rates by union membership, sex and work pattern**

	1984		1990	
	Unionized	Non-unionized	Unionized	Non-unionized
	1990 \$			
Total	13.62	10.29	17.53	13.47
Men	14.51	12.05	18.68	15.50
Women	12.21	8.45	16.01	11.40
Full-time	13.74	10.99	17.77	14.20
Men	14.59	12.68	18.74	16.07
Women	12.17	8.78	16.22	11.83
Part-time	12.27	7.36	15.87	10.21
Men	11.46	6.69	17.60	9.98
Women	12.46	7.61	15.28	10.29

Sources: Survey of Union Membership and Labour Market Activity Survey

hours worked. And a higher percentage of unionized workers were covered by a retirement plan.

It is hard to predict the future of the union movement in Canada. Will overall union density remain in the 33% range, as observed over the past three decades? Will it increase, or will it decline as seen in the United States? The answer is not clear. Reductions to the civil service, combined with the decline in the relative size of the manufacturing industries, will tend to bring the rate down. On the other hand, certain factors will tend to increase overall union density, namely, the continuing growth of the service sector, in which union membership has risen somewhat in recent years. The effect of these two opposing forces will determine the direction of overall union density in Canada. □

■ **Notes**

1 While the household surveys cover persons 16 years of age, the latter were deliberately excluded from the present analysis so that the survey data could be compared with those of another Statistics Canada database containing information on union member-

ship (the Adult Education and Training Survey), which does not cover 16 year-olds. Their exclusion should not lead to major differences in the results of this study, since, at that age, few persons participate fully in the labour market.

2 In the mid-1960s, legislation was introduced enabling public sector employees (in government, the education, health and social service industries, and certain Crown corporations such as Air Canada) to unionize.

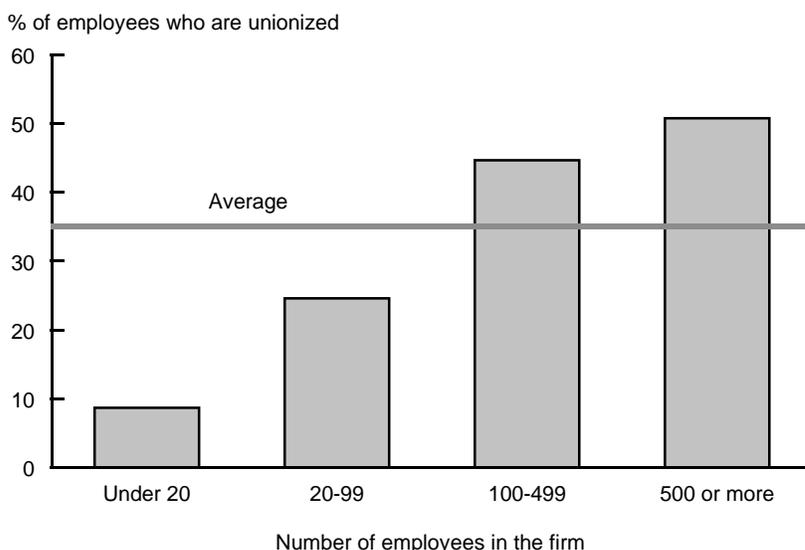
3 In fact, this shift would probably have caused a decline in union density had there not been an increase in the number of public sector employees, most of whom are unionized.

4 When this article went to press, unionization rates by industry were not yet available for 1993.

5 The growth of union membership in the service sector since 1976 is due in part to a change in the *Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act* that was introduced in 1983. This change added certain professional associations, such as those of nurses, doctors and teachers, which prior to 1983 were not included in the enumeration of labour unions. The effect of this inclusion can be clearly seen in Table 2: from 1982 to 1983, union density in the service industries jumped from 25% to 32%.

6 In this study, private services include trade industries, finance, insurance and real estate, and other services such as business services, accommodation, food and beverage services, amusement and recreation, personal and household services, and associations.

**Chart C
The proportion of unionized workers rises with firm size.**



Source: Labour Market Activity Survey, 1990

7 The following concerns data from household surveys. The analysis for this part is not based on union density, since these rates differ in some ways from those from CALURA. For further details, see *Two sources of data on unionized workers*. Most data on union membership presented in this section do not extend beyond 1990 or 1991, since for various financial and logistical reasons they have not been subsequently collected through household surveys. However, more recent data on union membership, which will soon be available, have been collected by the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, which replaced the Labour Market Activity Survey. In addition, starting in 1997, it will be possible to obtain union membership data on a regular basis as a result of the redesign of the Labour Force Survey.

8 1990 was a recession year, and 1984 was a year of expansion.

9 Average seniority as measured here does not reflect actual seniority but simply the period between the effective date of commencement of employment and the date on which the survey was conducted. In the case of seasonal workers, seniority is calculated from the date of commencement of employment each year. In other words, these workers cannot accumulate more than one year of seniority. For further details on this variable, see Belkhodja (1992).

10 This figure is drawn from the Survey of Work Arrangements of November 1991.

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