

Joblessness Worse In Outstate Areas

An Observer News Roundup

Unemployment has been high in the Detroit area, but it has been much more severe in many other areas in the state. This situation was revealed in the latest issue of Michigan Manpower Review, published by the Department of Labor Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC).

The state jobless rate was 6.4% in mid-March, the last point at which state-wide figures are available.

The Observer was told by the MESC's main office in Detroit that more recent figures on state-wide employment will not be available for a week to 10 days.

State-wide, unemployment tapered slightly in March. The callback of 23,000 auto production workers was mainly responsible for this. But, revealed the Review figures, the state's jobless total of 230,000 in March 1970 was nearly 1 1/2 times as steep as it was one year ago.

Total employment in the state was 3,021,000 in March. The March employment level, however, was 28,000 under the one-year ago figure because of slackening in factory employment," the Review figures declared.

DETROIT area employment, of course, is determined largely by the auto plants.

"Although the auto industry recalled workers, the industries supplying motor vehicles continued to cut back employment," the publication stated.

In the Detroit area, unemployment hit 5.7% this March, up from the 6.2% figure of this February. But, revealed the Review figures, unemployment was well ahead of the year ago level of 3.2%.

Total wage and salary employment this March numbered 1,495,000 persons. Last year in the same period total Detroit area employment reached 1,634,400.

The Review figures showed a trend of rising employment in non-manufacturing activities, but a decline in the manufacturing area.

"For the fifth consecutive month, the automobile industry furloughed production workers in a continuing effort to align production with the demand for cars, which remains well below the level of recent years," the Review declared.

SEASONAL unemployment, which includes construction work, was well ahead of the 1969 level, the Review stated.

The Review gave no forecast on state employment for the rest of 1970, but the publication's figures did indicate optimism if early-year jobless claims continues to decrease.

If the employment situation looked grim for the Detroit area, it was much worse elsewhere in the state.

In the Upper Peninsula, for example, unemployment in March hit 12.6%. This figure showed a gain in the jobless rate of 2% from February. This was caused, according to Review figures, by an increase in the labor force. But manufacturing employment fell from February to March.

Another telling figure about the plight of the Upper Peninsula's manufacturing worker is seen in that he earned an average of \$126.34 a week for a 41.6-work week at an average hourly rate of \$3.04. Detroit area production workers, by comparison, earned \$177.39 for a 41-hour work week during February at an hourly rate of \$4.34.

One bright spot on the Upper Peninsula employment scene was an announcement by the Copper Range Co., a large

employer. The concern revealed an expansion program which will boost yearly production at its White Pine operation from 159 million to 234 million pounds by 1972, an increase of 47%.

PORT HURON is another area in the state where unemployment is very high. Its unemployment was 11.7% in March, up from 10.5% in February.

Port Huron jobless totals were caused mainly by layoffs in manufacturing industries. The non-manufacturing sector showed an employment gain of 400 workers. The advent of warm weather forecasts more employment gains in this sector.

Other areas in the state hard hit by unemployment in March were: Bay City, 10%; Muskegon, 7.6%; and Grand Rapids, 7.1%.



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