

SECTION II.—LABOUR ORGANISATIONS.

1. **General.**—In Report No. 2 the method adopted in ascertaining the number of members in labour organisations throughout the Commonwealth was outlined, and the results, tabulated up to the end of 1912, were given. From the beginning of 1913 quarterly returns have been obtained from a considerable number of trade unions, both as to membership and unemployment, and this was supplemented at the end of the year by special inquiries as to the membership of those unions which, owing to the nature of the callings and industries covered, were unable to furnish quarterly unemployment returns. The following pages shew the general situation in regard to the trades union movement in the Commonwealth at the present time, and also its development since the year 1906: It is now fully recognised by all concerned that the affairs of no single union are disclosed in the published results. It is, perhaps, almost unnecessary to add that the investigations are based upon an impartial review of the evidence, and are used solely for general statistical purposes. The wide recognition of this has led to a more cordial readiness to assist the Bureau in securing complete information, and the thanks of the Bureau are due to the Secretaries of Trade Unions for their cordial co-operation in this matter.

2. **Development of Trade Unions in Australia, 1906 to 1917.**—The following table shews for the years specified the total number of trade unions in the Commonwealth, and the number and membership of those unions for which membership is available. The estimated total membership of all unions for years prior to 1912 is shewn in the last line of the table.

Number and Membership of Trade Unions in Commonwealth at end of each Year Specified, 1906 to 1917.

Particulars.	1906.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.
Total Number of Unions ..	302	419	482	573	621	710	712	713	705	747
No. of Unions for which membership available ..	253	375	442	542	621	710	712	713	705	747
Membership of these Unions ..	147,049	244,747	277,047	344,989	433,224	497,925	523,271	528,031	546,556	564,187
Estimated Total Membership of all Unions ..	175,529	273,461	302,119	364,732	"	"	"	"	"	"

These figures shew that the number of unions in 1917 was more than double the number in 1906. The estimated membership during the same period increased nearly four-fold. The estimated increase in membership in any one year was greatest in 1912, when it amounted to 68,492, and least in 1915, when it was only 4760. The increase in the year 1914 was 25,346; in 1915 4760; in 1916 18,525, and in 1917 17,631.

In this connection it should be remembered that those members of trade unions who had joined the Expeditionary Forces at the end of the years 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917 are not included in the membership for those years.

3. Number and Membership of Trade Unions and Branches, 1912 to 1917.—The following table gives particulars of the number of trade unions, the number of branch unions, and the number of members in each State and the Commonwealth at the end of the years 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917.

Number of Trade Unions, Branch Unions and Membership, at end of Years 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917.

Year.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N'thern T'tory.	Total.	C'wth.
NO. OF SEPARATE UNIONS.									
1912 ..	177	151	67	78	97	51	..	621	*408
1913 ..	201	162	94	86	107	60	..	710	*432
1914 ..	197	170	86	87	107	62	3	712	*430
1915 ..	203	161	89	87	104	66	3	713	*415
1916 ..	199	151	93	86	107	66	3	705	*392
1917 ..	220	156	96	93	108	71	3	747	*389
NO. OF BRANCHES.									
1912 ...	453	241	226	62	177	83	..	1,192	†1,405
1913 ...	555	292	230	74	174	60	..	1,385	†1,663
1914 ...	598	314	224	85	214	62	..	1,497	†1,779
1915 ...	721	312	246	94	203	63	..	1,639	†1,937
1916 ...	790	361	290	102	170	72	..	1,785	†2,098
1917 ..	765	353	291	93	195	76	..	1,778	†2,136
NO. OF MEMBERS.									
1912 ..	192,626	116,557	44,768	37,336	33,232	8,655	..	433,224	433,224
1913 ..	230,677	130,176	51,683	40,061	35,317	10,011	..	497,925	497,925
1914 ..	240,023	138,810	65,580	40,956	38,100	9,149	647	523,271	523,271
1915 ..	241,979	141,993	68,310	39,264	35,980	9,346	1,159	528,031	528,031
1916 ..	244,074	147,614	66,807	42,537	33,900	10,263	1,361	546,556	546,556
1917 ..	248,851	148,730	75,393	45,400	33,263	10,886	1,664	564,187	564,187
PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP.									
1913 ..	12.0	11.2	11.5	10.7	10.6	11.6	..	11.5	11.5
1914 ..	4.1	6.8	7.6	2.2	7.9	18.6	..	5.1	5.1
1915 ..	0.8	2.3	4.9	14.1	15.6	2.2	79.1	0.9	0.9
1916 ..	0.9	4.0	14.6	3.3	15.8	9.5	17.4	3.5	3.5
1917 ..	2.0	0.8	12.9	6.7	11.9	6.1	22.5	3.2	3.2

* Allowing for inter-State excess. The figures represent the number of distinct organisations and inter-State groups of organisations in the Commonwealth. They do not represent the total number of organisations which are practically independent and self-governing (see remarks below).
 † Includes not only branches of separate State unions and sub-branches in each State of inter-State unions, but also head State branches of inter-State unions. ‡ Decrease.

In the above table, under heading the "Number of Separate Unions," each union represented in a State is counted only once, regardless of the number of branches in that State. In taking the total number of separate unions in the Commonwealth (see last column but one), it is obvious that, in the case of inter-State and similar unions, there will be duplication, since each such union is counted once in each State in which it has any branches. In the figures given in the last column, deduction is made for this duplication.

Except in the last column, the "Number of Branches" indicates the number of branches of State head offices, which may, of course, themselves be branches of an inter-State or larger organisation. State branches of inter-State or federated unions, as well as sub-branches within a State, are included under the heading "branches" in the last column. It should be observed that the schemes of organisation of these inter-State or federated unions vary greatly in character, and the number of separate Commonwealth unions does not fairly represent the number of practically independent organisations in Australia. In some of these unions the State organisations are bound together under a system of unification with centralised control, while in others the State units are practically independent and self-governing, the federal bond being loose and existing only for one or two specified purposes.

The increase in membership in 1913 was equal to 11.5; in 1914 to 5.1; in 1915 to 0.9; in 1916 to 3.5, and in 1917 to 3.2 per cent. The increase in population from 1912 to 1913 amounted to 1.02 per cent., and from 1913 to 1914 to 1.4 per cent. In 1917 the total population of the Commonwealth was slightly lower than in 1914.

In 1917, leaving out the Northern Territory, the percentage increase was greatest in Queensland. There was a decrease in membership in Western Australia in each of the years 1915, 1916 and 1917.

It may be stated that the comparatively large increase in membership in Queensland is mainly the result of the operations of the recently enacted Arbitration Act, under which organisations of Government servants may make application for awards. Consequently, such employees have availed themselves of the provisions of this Act, and thus increased the aggregate total membership in that State.

4. Number of Unions and Membership in Industrial Groups, 1917.

—The following table gives the number of unions and membership in Industrial Groups in each State. The number of unions specified for each State refers to the number of different unions represented in each State; that is to say, inter-State or federated unions are counted once in each State in which they are represented, but sub-branches within a State are not counted. In order to avoid disclosing the affairs of individual unions, in cases where there are only either one or two unions in any group in a State, the membership is not given separately, but is included in the total figures for the State and Commonwealth.

**Number of Unions and Membership in Industrial Groups in each State,
December, 1917.**

Industrial Groups.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N'th. T'tory	Total.
NUMBER OF UNIONS.								
I. Wood, Furniture, etc.	4	3	2	3	4	3	..	19
II. Engineering, Metal Works, etc.	22	19	12	10	7	4	1	75
III. Foods, Drink, Tobacco, etc.	23	17	4	9	13	8	..	74
IV. Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc.	7	7	2	3	3	4	..	26
V. Books, Printing, etc.	8	10	2	2	6	2	..	29
VI. Other Manufacturing	30	21	6	13	9	5	..	84
VII. Building	15	13	10	8	9	4	1	60
VIII. Mining, Quarries, etc.	13	3	2	1	4	2	..	25
IX. Railway and Tramway Services	12	5	4	4	5	4	..	34
X. Other Land Transport	9	4	3	2	2	2	..	22
XI. Shipping, etc.	22	7	17	10	8	9	..	73
XII. Pastoral, Agricultural, etc.	3	3	1	1	1	1	..	10
XIII. Domestic, Hotels, etc.	6	5	1	2	5	..	..	19
XIV. Miscellaneous	46	39	30	25	33	23	1	197
Total	220	156	96	93	108	71	3	747

NUMBER OF MEMBERS.

I. Wood, Furniture, etc.	6,726	4,526	*	1,041	1,459	820	..	†14,581
II. Engineering, Metal Works, etc.	23,482	11,408	4,708	4,434	2,481	510	..	47,023
III. Foods, Drink, Tobacco, etc.	19,933	11,111	5,562	2,290	1,384	949	..	41,220
IV. Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc.	9,372	15,164	*	1,576	587	408	..	127,107
V. Books, Printing, etc.	4,969	3,875	*	..	467	..	..	11,401
VI. Other Manufacturing	15,087	10,454	925	1,871	1,472	208	..	30,017
VII. Building	15,354	10,382	3,741	3,534	1,204	557	*	34,772
VIII. Mines, Quarries, etc.	21,264	3,214	*	..	4,065	..	..	34,029
IX. Railway and Tramway Services	37,580	17,664	10,668	5,660	7,030	918	..	79,520
X. Other Land Transport	5,488	4,560	2,035	..	..	..	..	14,728
XI. Shipping, etc.	23,401	15,149	5,319	5,241	1,579	1,057	..	51,746
XII. Pastoral, Agricultural, etc.	14,639	11,128	*	..	..	..	..	40,735
XIII. Domestic, Hotels, etc.	5,203	2,781	*	..	1,370	..	..	10,163
XIV. Miscellaneous	46,323	27,314	26,743	12,178	8,641	2,105	*	123,309
Total	243,851	148,730	75,393	45,400	33,263	10,886	11,664	564,187

* Not available for publication separately; included in State and Commonwealth totals.
† Incomplete, see footnote *. ‡ Membership of Groups II., VII. and XIV. included in the South Australian numbers.

5. Number of Male and Female Members of Unions, 1916 and 1917.

—The total membership of trade unions in Australia at the end of 1917 was 564,187, consisting of 518,582 males, and 45,605 females. The corresponding figures for 1916 were 506,981, and 39,575 respectively. In 1912 and 1913, the male membership was 95.9 per cent., and the female membership 4.1 per cent. of the total union membership; in 1914 the percentages were 95.7 and 4.3; in 1915, 94.5 and 5.5; in 1916, 92.7 and 7.3; and in 1917, 91.9 and 8.1.

Of the 45,605 female members of trade unions in 1917, 17,095, or 37.5 per cent., are included in Group IV. (Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc.), and 9,703, or 21.3 per cent. in Groups III. (Food, Drink, etc.), and XIII. (Domestic, Hotels, etc.)

6. Percentage of Male and Female Members of Unions on Total Number of Employees 20 years of age and over, 1917.—The results of the Census taken in 1911 shew the percentage of male and female employees (i.e., persons "in receipt of wages or salary," and persons "unemployed"), 20 years of age and over, on the total male and

female population. Applying these percentages to the estimated total male and female population in 1917, the estimated number of adult employees of each sex in 1917 is obtained. This is of course subject to some measure of uncertainty at a point of time—like the present—viz., 6-7 years after the date of the Census.

The following table shows separately for males and females and for each State (a) the number of members of trade unions, (b) the estimated total number of employees of each sex, 20 years of age and over, in all professions, trades, and occupations, and (c) the percentage of the former (a) on the latter (b). It should be pointed out that *the estimated total number of employees comprises all persons (over the age specified) in receipt of wages or salary, as well as those unemployed*; the estimate therefore includes a large number of adults who are either not eligible at all for membership of any trade union (such as certain persons employed in professional occupations) or who, while eligible for membership in so far as the nature of their trade or occupation is concerned, do not reside in a locality which is covered by any union embracing their particular trade or occupation. It is also proper to observe that the age at which persons are eligible for membership varies in different unions. The Census results are classified in quinquennial age groups, and the sum of the groups 20 years of age and over is taken as more closely approximating to the average age of admission to membership than that of any other groups.

Percentage of Male and Female Members of Unions on Estimated Total Number of Male and Female Employees, 20 years of Age and over, in all Professions, Trades, and Occupations, at end of Year 1917.*

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Nthn. T'ory.	C'wlth.
MALES.								
No. of Members of Unions ..	233,004	129,861	69,338	43,073	31,214	10,441	1,651	518,582
Estimated Total No. of Employees 20 years of age and over ..	366,274	243,128	135,145	74,295	71,938	34,565	2,125	927,470
Percent. of Members on Estimated Total No. Employees ..	63.6	53.4	51.3	58.0	43.4	30.2	77.7	55.0
FEMALES.								
No. of Members of Unions ..	15,847	13,869	6,055	2,327	2,049	445	13	45,605
Estimated Total No. of Employees 20 years of age and over ..	84,465	80,367	27,574	19,440	13,232	7,689	89	232,856
Percent. of Members on Estimated Total No. Employees ..	18.8	23.5	22.0	12.0	15.5	5.8	14.6	19.6

* Corresponding figures for 1912 will be found in Report No. 2, page 12; for 1913, in Report No. 5, page 10; for 1914 and 1915 in Report No. 6, page 11; and for 1916 Report No. 7, page 343.

7. **Classification of Trade Unions in Commonwealth according to Number of Members, 1912 to 1917.**—The following table shows the number and membership of all trade unions in the Commonwealth in 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917 respectively, classified according to size. In this table inter-State unions are, of course, only counted once :—

Classification of Trade Unions in Commonwealth according to Number of Members at end of Years 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917.

Classification.	10,000 and over.	5000 and under 10,000.	2000 and under 5000.	1000 and under 2000.	500 and under 1000.	300 and under 500.	200 and under 300.	100 and under 200.	50 and under 100.	Under 50.	Total.
NUMBER OF UNIONS.											
1912 ..	7	15	26	43	32	32	39	67	72	75	408
1913 ..	9	17	26	35	45	47	26	81	84	62	432
1914 ..	8	17	29	39	52	45	32	72	67	69	430
1915 ..	9	16	30	41	44	35	34	69	63	74	415
1916 ..	11	16	35	33	47	43	25	53	59	70	392
1917 ..	9	19	27	36	48	44	28	48	63	67	389

MEMBERSHIP.											
1912 ..	132,335	99,718	79,614	60,556	22,585	12,234	9,483	9,323	5,106	2,268	433,224
1913 ..	176,188	121,710	75,357	48,938	32,154	17,994	6,406	11,326	5,914	1,938	497,925
1914 ..	176,157	125,021	84,359	59,350	37,141	16,439	7,898	10,141	4,572	2,193	523,271
1915 ..	186,755	122,009	89,295	61,264	39,651	13,405	8,308	9,408	4,537	2,399	523,931
1916 ..	210,990	113,587	95,143	49,170	32,429	16,657	6,003	7,091	4,326	2,160	546,556
1917 ..	217,002	144,198	78,019	52,258	34,944	17,433	7,032	6,742	4,550	2,004	664,187

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP.											
1912 ..	30.5	23.0	18.4	14.0	5.2	2.8	2.2	2.2	1.2	0.5	100.0
1913 ..	35.4	24.4	15.1	9.8	6.5	3.6	1.3	2.3	1.2	0.4	100.0
1914 ..	33.6	23.9	16.1	11.4	7.1	3.2	1.5	1.9	0.9	0.4	100.0
1915 ..	35.3	23.1	16.9	11.6	5.8	2.5	1.6	1.8	0.9	0.5	100.0
1916 ..	40.3	20.8	17.4	9.0	5.9	3.0	1.1	1.3	0.8	0.4	100.0
1917 ..	38.5	25.6	13.8	9.3	6.2	3.1	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.4	100.0

It will be seen that at the end of the year 1912 the seven largest unions (in the group 10,000 and over) comprised 132,335 members, or no less than 30.5 per cent. of the total membership of all unions. In 1913 there were nine unions; in 1914 eight unions, and in 1915 nine unions in this group. In each of the years specified their membership comprised over 30.0 per cent. of the total membership of all unions. In 1916 the 11 unions in this group comprised no less than 40.3 per cent. and in 1917 the 9 unions comprised 38.3 per cent. of the total membership of all unions.

The membership of the unions in the next group (5000, and under 10,000) comprised in each year specified over 20 per cent. of the total membership of all unions. The percentage in these two groups amounted to 53.5 in 1912; 59.8 in 1913; 57.5 in 1914; 58.4 in 1915; 61.1 in 1916; and in 1917 64.1, of the total membership in those years.

8. Number and Membership of Interstate or Federated Trade Unions in Commonwealth at end of Years 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917.—The following table gives particulars of interstate or federated trade unions having branches in two or more States. The figures given include inter-State unions registered under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, as well as federated unions which are not so registered:—

**Number and Membership of Interstate or Federated Trade Unions in Commonwealth
at the end of Years 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917.**

PARTICULARS.	UNIONS OPERATING IN—					TOTAL.
	2 States.	3 States.	4 States.	5 States.	6 States.	
Number of Unions, 1912	20	11	17	14	10	72
" " 1913	16	11	16	18	17	78
" " 1914	18	9	14	16	22	79
" " 1915	17	11	14	16	23	81
" " 1916	15	11	12	19	25	81
" " 1917	18	11	18	14	33	94
Number of Members, 1912	31,358	18,147	55,517	43,548	131,201	270,771
" " 1913	31,063	13,389	73,186	54,202	130,597	352,437
" " 1914	26,423	7,853	64,040	67,427	190,084	355,827
" " 1915	21,709	10,425	73,760	76,633	197,310	379,837
" " 1916	18,185	12,739	56,717	101,848	222,794	412,289
" " 1917	18,286	18,649	76,981	90,068	252,310	456,303

* Three unions in this group have, in addition to branches in each of the six States, a branch in the Northern Territory.

It will be seen that in 1917, 94 out of the 389 separate associations and groups of associations are organised on an inter-State basis. The membership of these 94 unions amounts to 456,303, or 80.9 per cent. of the total membership (564,187) of all unions. The number of inter-State or federated unions in 1912 was 72, comprising 64.6 per cent.; in 1913, 78 comprising 70.8 per cent.; in 1914, 79 comprising 68.0 per cent.; in 1915, 81 comprising 71.9 per cent.; and in 1916, 81 comprising 75.4 per cent. of the total membership of all unions.

9. **Central Labour Organisations.**—In each of the metropolitan towns, as well as in a number of other industrial centres, delegate organisations, consisting of representatives from a group of trade unions, have been established. Their revenue is raised by means of a per capita tax on the members of each affiliated union. In most of the towns where such central organisations exist, the majority of the local unions are affiliated with the central organisation, which is usually known as the Labour or Trades Hall Council, or the Labour Federation. In Western Australia a unified system of organisation extends over the industrial centres throughout the State, and there is a provincial branch of the Australian Labour Federation, having a central council and executive, and metropolitan and branch district councils, to which the local bodies are affiliated. The central council, on which all district councils are represented, meets periodically. In the other States, however, the organisation is not so close, and though provision usually exists in the rules of the central council at the capital town of each State for the organisation of district councils, or for the representation on the central council of the local councils in the smaller industrial centres of the State, the councils in each State are, as a matter of fact, independent bodies. The table shews the number of metropolitan and district or local labour councils, together with the number of unions and branches of unions affiliated therewith, in each State at the end of the years 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917.

Central Labour Organisations—Number and Unions Affiliated at the end of the Years 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917.

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	C'with.	
No. of Councils	1914	4	5	1	4	11	1	28
	1915	3	5	1	4	10	1	24
	1916	4	5	4	4	10	1	28
	1917	4	5	2	4	11	1	27
No. of Unions and Branch Unions Affiliated	1914	164	198	18	84	182	24	668
	1915	150	193	26	89	183	22	668
	1916	169	205	67	90	181	20	732
	1917	163	192	46	82	171	18	672

The figures given in the above table as to number of unions do not necessarily represent separate unions, since the branches of a large union may be affiliated to the local trades councils in the several towns in which they are represented.

Between the trade union and the central organisation of unions may be classed certain State or district councils, organised on trade lines and composed of delegates from separate unions, the interests of the members of which are closely connected by reason of the occupations of their members, such, for example, as delegate councils of bakers, bread carters and mill employees, or of unions connected directly or indirectly with the iron, steel or brass trades, or with the building trades.

The Brisbane District Council of the Australian Labour Federation ceased to exist when the Australian Labour Federation became absorbed in the Australian Workers' Union. A new Labour Council, however, has been organised, to which 46 trade unions are now affiliated.

10. Particulars of Unions Registered under Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, classified according to Industrial Groups, at end of Year, 1917.—Under Part V. of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act any association of not less than 100 employees in any industry may be registered. The following table gives particulars of registered unions at the end of the year 1917. Registered unions include both inter-State associations and associations operating within one State only.

Particulars of Unions Registered under Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, classified according to Industrial Groups, at end of Year 1917.

Industrial Group.	No. of Unions.	Members-ship.	Industrial Group.	No. of Unions.	Members-ship.
I. Wood, Furniture, etc. . .	3	14,830	IX. Railway & Tramway Services	1	*
II. Engineering, Metal Works, etc.	12	42,038	X. Other Land Transport	2	*
III. Food, Drink, Tobacco, etc.	11	32,822	XI. Shipping, etc.	9	44,936
IV. Clothing, Hats, Boots, etc.	5	27,006	XII. Pastoral, Agricultural, etc. . .	2	*
V. Books, Printing, etc. . .	3	5,582	XIII. Domestic, Hotels, etc. . . .	4	6,654
VI. Other Manufacturing . . .	19	19,860	XIV. Miscellaneous	26	70,979
VII. Building	6	26,139	TOTAL	106	413,356
VIII. Mining, Quarries, etc. . .	3	31,026			

* Not available for publication separately included in total for all groups.

The figures given in the above table regarding unions registered under the Commonwealth Act are not comparable with those given in the table in paragraph 8 hereof regarding all inter-State and federated unions. A few federated unions included in the table in paragraph 8 are not registered under the Commonwealth Act, while, on the other hand, a number of purely State organisations registered under the Act are, of course, not included in the table in paragraph 8.

SECTION III.—FLUCTUATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

1. **General.**—In Section IX of this Report, the method of index-numbers is applied to trace variations in rates of wages in the Commonwealth since 1891, while in Sections IV., V., VI. and VII. variations in retail prices and purchasing-power of money, and in wholesale and import and export prices are shewn by a similar method. In order to elucidate further the progress of events, it is desirable to supplement that information, so far as practicable, by furnishing index-numbers which disclose the fluctuations in employment and unemployment.

Employment index-numbers serve not only to throw light upon the figures shewing the course of wages, prices, and purchasing-power of money, inasmuch as they indicate the relative loss of time through lack of employment, but also to furnish a useful measure of the fluctuations of industrial activity regarded as a whole. In this connection, it may be said that while export statistics relate only to the margin of national production which is sent overseas, statistics of employment measure, on the other hand, the relative activity or depression of the whole of the industries to which they relate, including, that is, production for the home market as well as for export.

2. **Number Unemployed in Various Industries, 1908 to 1917.**—The table herewith shews for the end of each year specified:—

- (a) The number of unions for which returns as to unemployment are available.
- (b) The number of members of such unions.
- (c) The number of members unemployed, and
- (d) The percentage of the number of members unemployed (c) on the total membership (b).