

Service, Compensation, and Age of Railroad Employees, 1941

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COMPENSATION CREDITED under the Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts aggregated \$2.6 billion for the calendar year 1941. This total is based on quarterly and annual reports of wages and service of covered employees, submitted to the Railroad Retirement Board by railroad employers. Annual summaries of these compensation reports were tabulated to permit analyses of personal and economic characteristics of workers with wages credited in 1941. Reported compensation approximating \$19.7 million was excluded from the tabulations because of incomplete identification. The tabulations also exclude earnings for any employee in excess of \$300 for any month.¹

Compensation credited for 1941 was the highest recorded in the 5 calendar years for which wage and service records have been maintained by the Board. It exceeded the comparable 1940 total of \$2.2 billion by 19 percent. The increase was due mainly to the 20-percent rise in the railroad labor force, from 1.7 million to 2.0 million.

Notwithstanding the rise in total compensation, the average compensation of all employees who worked in the railroad industry in 1941, regardless of length of service, fell from \$1,333 in 1940 to \$1,311 in 1941, a decrease of 1.7 percent. This decline was the result of a number of opposing factors.

Among the elements leading to an increase in average annual earnings were (1) the rise in the number of workers with more continuous employment; (2) the order of the Wage and Hour Administrator, effective March 1, 1941, which established a 36-cent minimum hourly rate for employees of class I railroads; and (3) the general wage-rate increases provided under the emergency wage order of December 1941 and applicable to the last 4 months of that year.

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¹ For a detailed description of the method of tabulation, see prefatory note to *Compensation and Service, Railroad Employees, 1941: Statistical Tables*, Railroad Retirement Board, December 1942. The method of allocating individual accounts by class of employer and occupation in 1941 differed slightly from that of previous years, but comparability of the data is not affected appreciably.

According to reports of class I railroads to the Interstate Commerce Commission, back pay increased total compensation for September, October, and November 1941, the period to which it applied, from \$596,000 to \$661,000, or about 11 percent. The increase for the calendar year 1941, due to the wage-rate advance, may therefore be estimated roughly at 4 percent of credited compensation.

The principal factors causing a decline in average compensation were the large number of employees, estimated at 550,000, who entered the industry for the first time in 1941, and the rise in the number who left. The increased number of separations resulted in larger numbers who did not work the full year, and the new employees, entering at various times during the year, naturally did not have the opportunity for a full year's employment. The relatively low wages of both groups had a greater effect on the over-all average than in 1940, since they constituted a larger fraction of the total number of workers.

Since wage rates, service months, and annual earnings vary in accordance with occupation, changes in the occupational pattern of the labor force have an important effect on average compensation. The proportion of employees in low-wage, short-service employment increased in 1941, thereby causing a reduction in the figure for average annual earnings of all employees.

The influx of new workers and the change in occupational composition of the working force is also reflected in the decline in the average number of months of credited service. For the industry as a whole, the average fell to 8.7 months in 1941, from 9.4 in the previous year, a drop of 7.4 percent. A decline in average service greater than a decrease in average annual compensation indicates an increase in the average earnings per month of service. This average rose from \$142 to \$151.

Wage and Service Distribution

The comparison of averages is likely to be very misleading unless it is supplemented by informa-

tion on the wage, service, and occupational distribution of employees in 1940 and 1941. The distribution by wage groups serves to clarify the effect on the wage pattern of the considerable growth of the railroad labor force (table 1). There was a striking increase in 1941 in both the lower and upper wage brackets. Some 656,000 employees, or 33 percent of the total, earned less than \$600 in 1941 compared with 28 percent in 1940. The wage groups between \$600 and \$2,000 included about the same number in each year: 789,000 in 1941 and 782,000 in 1940. Employees who earned \$2,000 or over in 1941 numbered 560,000—24 percent more than in the previous year. The changes in the wage distribution reflect both the accession of new workers and the better employment opportunities and higher wage rates of those already attached to the industry.

Even though average annual compensation declined in 1941, a rise in compensation is to be noted for each group in the distribution by months of service (table 2). This seeming paradox is the result of the shift in the service distributions. As compared with 1940, there was an increase in the proportion of short-service employees. Only 56 percent of all employees were credited with 12 months of service in 1941 compared with 63 percent in the previous year. On the other hand, the number who worked 3 months or less in covered employment increased from 17 to 22 percent.

The differences between the increases in annual

Table 1.—*Railroad retirement: Number and percentage distribution of employees by amount of credited compensation in 1941 and 1940*

Credited compensation	All employees			
	1941		1940	
	Number	Percentage distribution	Number	Percentage distribution
Total	2,005,000	100.0	1,670,917	100.0
Less than \$200	423,371	21.1	209,131	17.0
200-399	130,199	6.8	92,423	5.5
400-599	96,784	4.8	73,656	4.4
600-799	87,402	4.4	85,851	5.2
800-999	103,591	5.2	105,165	6.3
1,000-1,199	114,794	5.7	110,942	6.7
1,200-1,399	108,427	5.4	105,100	6.3
1,400-1,599	112,350	5.6	117,411	7.0
1,600-1,799	127,848	6.4	128,045	7.7
1,800-1,999	134,028	6.7	128,705	7.7
2,000-2,399	245,127	12.2	104,012	11.6
2,400-2,799	150,408	7.5	110,072	6.6
2,800-3,199	84,364	4.2	60,729	3.6
3,200-3,599	56,611	2.8	37,329	2.2
3,600	23,039	1.2	21,386	1.3

Table 2.—*Railroad retirement: Number of employees and average credited compensation, by number of months of service, 1941 and 1940*

Months of service	Employees				Average compensation		
	1941		1940		1941	1940	Percentage change
	Number	Percentage distribution	Number	Percentage distribution			
Total	2,005,000	100.0	1,670,917	100.0	\$1,311	\$1,333	-1.7
12	1,119,119	55.8	1,053,402	63.0	2,000	1,859	+8.1
11	50,203	2.8	60,523	3.6	1,394	1,270	+9.8
10	49,408	2.5	41,837	2.5	1,162	1,052	+10.5
9	50,310	2.5	41,288	2.5	1,000	900	+11.1
8	40,442	2.3	35,188	2.1	812	733	+10.8
7	52,039	2.6	34,051	2.1	698	598	+16.7
6	57,522	2.9	37,031	2.2	567	484	+17.1
5	62,944	3.1	38,020	2.3	431	372	+15.9
4	75,050	3.7	45,127	2.7	308	266	+15.8
3	94,604	4.7	56,099	3.4	200	175	+14.3
2	131,477	6.6	77,076	4.6	95	83	+14.5
1	209,391	10.5	150,105	9.0	31	26	+19.2

compensation in the various service-month groups are especially notable, the percentage advance being generally greater as the number of months of service decreases. The increases are due in part to greater continuity of employment within the months actually worked, as shown by reports of class I railroads to the Interstate Commerce Commission, which indicated an additional 3 percent in average hours compensated. Part is also attributable to the higher wage rates. The larger percentage increases for the short-service groups reflect the relative weighting of the wage advance in favor of employees in the lower-wage occupations who had less service than those in the higher-paid occupations.

Increases in employment were recorded for all classes of employers except class II and III railroads; the increases ranged from 9 percent for the Pullman Company to 21 percent for class I railroads (table 3). Although all employer classes, including the short lines, participated generally in the great expansion of traffic in 1941, changes in employment are not necessarily directly related to changes in volume of business.

The acceptance of new companies into coverage under the act, and the inclusion in 1941 of data for companies whose reports of compensation were not available when the 1940 figures were prepared, must also be taken into account. Thus, switching and terminal companies other than class I, for which a 20-percent increase is recorded, actually experienced an increase of about 15 percent; similarly the 14-percent in-

crease for electric railroads is closer to 2 percent. In both employer classes, particularly the latter, companies which did not report in 1940 submitted statements for 1941, and their employees were counted among the 1941 accessions.

Much of the variation is due to the difference in occupational composition of the various employer groups, which is in turn related to the character of their operations. For example, a large part of the increase in class I employment is attributable to the considerable growth of maintenance-of-way employment; the Pullman Company, on the other hand, employs no maintenance-of-way workers.

The decrease in average service months also affected average compensation. The two employer classes showing declines in average annual compensation—class I railroads and car loan companies—experienced the largest reduction in average service. Accordingly, average compensation of employees of class II and III railroads, in which the smallest decrease in average service was noted, showed the largest rise.

As is indicated in table 2, changes in annual earnings are more significant when related to employees with the same amount of service in each year. Of special importance are those employees who worked 12 months in each year. This group constituted 56 percent of all employees with service in 1941. The tabulation below shows the percentage change from 1940 to 1941 in the number of employees with 12 months of service and their average annual compensation.

Class of employer	Number of employees	Average compensation
Class I railroads	+6.3	+8.3
Class II and III railroads	-6.3	+9.6
Switching and terminal companies, class I	+6.1	+7.6
Switching and terminal companies, other than class I	+11.7	+8.4
Electric railroads	+3.6	+7.6
Hallway Express Agency	+7.3	+1.3
Pullman Company	+9.0	+9.0
Car loan companies	+3.5	+6.2

The largest growth in the number of steadily employed workers, 12 percent, is shown for switching and terminal companies other than class I. The smallest increase, 3.5 percent, was recorded for car loan companies. Only class II and III railroads showed a decrease. Increases in average compensation are noted for every class of employer; the sharpest rise was in class II and III railroads.

Occupational Groups

Because of the wide occupational differences in continuity of employment and wage rates, these factors must be considered in evaluating annual average wages, even when the fully employed group is separated from the others. For this reason, data are presented in table 4 for selected occupational groups of class I railroad employees, who accounted for 86 percent of all covered employees in 1941. Although every group showed increases in employment, there was considerable variation, ranging from 3 percent for station agents and telegraphers to 53 percent for extra-gang men. Generally the groups showing the greatest growth included the lower paid, less skilled employees. Increases approximating 50 percent were recorded for extra-gang men, shop laborers (maintenance of equipment and stores), and station-and-platform laborers. These three groups accounted for 46 percent of the net addition to the labor force on class I railroads. The next largest increase, 21 percent, was for helpers and apprentices.

All but three groups—clerical employees, shop laborers, and station-and-platform laborers—scored advances in average wages; they varied from 3 percent for skilled maintenance-of-way employees to 12 percent for the skilled shop-craft employees.

As expected, the changes in average annual wages were closely related to changes in average service. The two laborer groups which showed decreases of 10 and 14 percent in average wages suffered decreases of 18 and 22 percent in average service. On the other hand, skilled shop employees, who registered the largest percentage increase in compensation, experienced no decline in average service.

The proportion of employees with 12 months of service in 1941 differed considerably from group to group. For the extra-gang men, other maintenance-of-way men, station-and-platform laborers, and shop laborers, the proportion of full-time workers ranged from 7 to 39 percent. For skilled shop employees, station agents and telegraphers, and engineers and conductors, the percentage with substantially steady employment was much greater, constituting 84 to 88 percent of all employees in each group.

In 1941, there were more employees with 12 months of service in all groups except shop

Table 3.—Railroad retirement: Number of employees, average credited compensation, and average number of months of service, by selected class of employer, 1941 and 1940

Class of employer	Number of employees			Average credited compensation			Average number of months of service		
	1941	1940	Percentage change	1941	1940	Percentage change	1941	1940	Percentage change
Class I railroads.....	1,721,577	1,421,222	+21.1	\$1,331	\$1,359	-2.1	8.7	9.5	-8.4
Class II and III railroads.....	24,840	25,307	-2.1	1,058	904	+0.4	8.7	8.9	-2.2
Switching and terminal companies, class I.....	52,209	45,287	+15.4	1,404	1,394	+7	8.8	9.3	-5.4
Switching and terminal companies, other than class I.....	30,976	25,708	+20.2	1,146	1,123	+2.0	8.0	8.3	-3.0
Electric railroads.....	20,034	17,544	+14.2	1,220	1,215	+4	9.0	9.5	-5.3
Railway Express Agency.....	87,484	77,903	+12.2	1,149	1,142	+0.6	8.1	8.3	-2.4
Pullman Company.....	27,050	25,543	+0.4	1,200	1,100	+1.0	9.7	10.4	-6.7
Car loan companies.....	15,333	13,604	+12.7	921	952	-3.3	7.4	8.0	-7.5

¹ For purposes of comparability with 1940, includes 518 employees of a carrier classified by the Interstate Commerce Commission as a class I railroad, effective Jan. 1, 1941.

and station-and-platform laborers. Although the number of extra-gang men increased 28 percent, the rise is not particularly significant, since employees with 12 months of service formed only 7 percent of all extra-gang men. The largest gains in full-time employment were achieved by skilled shop employees and firemen and brakemen; together these groups accounted for 60 percent of the net gain on class I railroads.

In general, the effect of improving business conditions on average compensation was more favorable for the group with 12 months of service than for the total group. For the former, the increases varied from 4 percent for engineers and conductors to 15 percent for other maintenance-of-way men. The four laborer groups, whose average compensation ranged from \$1,074 to \$1,368, showed the most substantial improvement over

1940—from 12 percent for extra-gang men to 15 percent for other maintenance-of-way men. On the other hand, engineers and conductors, who had the highest average compensation—\$2,988—registered the smallest rise. These figures reflect, for the most part, the varying effect of the minimum wage order.

Geographic Distribution

The great expansion of railroad activity engendered by the accelerating defense and war-production program had different impacts in various parts of the country (table 5). The largest increases in employment were in the eastern and western districts, where the number of employees rose 23 percent, almost double the increase for the southern district. Especially notable are the 30 and 28-percent advances in

Table 4.—Railroad retirement: Number of employees of class I railroads, average credited compensation, and average number of months of service, by selected occupational group, 1941

Occupational group	Number of employees					Average credited compensation per employee				Average number of months of service	
	Total		Employees with 12 months of service			Total		Employees with 12 months of service		1941	Percentage change from 1940
	Number 1941	Percentage change from 1940	Number 1941	Percent of total	Percentage change from 1940	Amount 1941	Percentage change from 1940	Amount 1941	Percentage change from 1940		
Clerical.....	136,957	+15.2	106,058	78.1	+3.4	\$1,033	-1.7	\$1,019	+5.8	10.0	-5.4
Maintenance of way and structures, skilled.....	36,425	+14.3	25,253	69.3	+0.2	1,586	+3.0	1,034	+7.2	10.3	-3.7
Extra-gang men.....	174,604	+53.0	12,020	7.2	+27.7	200	+5.1	1,070	+12.4	4.1	-2.4
Maintenance of way and structures, laborers other than extra-gang.....	243,470	+10.8	78,323	32.2	+1.4	522	+5.2	1,074	+14.6	6.0	-7.0
Maintenance of equipment and stores, skilled.....	161,937	+9.7	135,808	83.9	+13.6	2,005	+11.7	2,188	+10.5	11.2	0
Maintenance of equipment and stores, laborers.....	120,812	+48.0	46,703	38.7	-0.5	760	-14.0	1,317	+13.0	7.4	-22.1
Helpers and apprentices.....	127,590	+20.8	78,405	61.4	+10.3	1,244	+5.2	1,614	+11.9	9.7	-5.8
Station agents and telegraphers.....	49,110	+2.9	42,200	86.0	+2.5	1,870	+3.3	2,055	+4.4	11.2	-0.9
Station-and-platform laborers.....	115,397	+48.7	35,709	30.9	-1.5	608	-10.2	1,368	+13.2	6.3	-18.2
Engineers and conductors.....	92,412	+6.4	81,274	87.9	+7.3	2,833	+4.2	2,088	+4.0	11.5	0
Firemen and brakemen.....	220,252	+10.9	150,064	68.1	+13.8	1,965	+4.7	2,441	+7.8	10.2	-2.9

Table 5.—Number of class I railroad employees in 1941 and 1940 and percentage increase in 1941, by Interstate Commerce Commission district and region

District and region	Number of employees		Percentage increase
	1941	1940	
Eastern district.....	738,101	601,032	22.8
Northeastern region.....	78,682	68,208	15.4
Great Lakes region.....	311,924	261,831	19.1
Central eastern region.....	347,555	270,993	28.3
Southern district.....	283,684	252,020	12.5
Pocahontas region.....	64,444	58,508	10.1
Southern region.....	219,140	193,512	13.2
Western district.....	600,832	568,170	23.2
Northwestern region.....	210,010	184,105	14.1
Central western region.....	357,902	274,026	30.3
Southwestern region.....	131,911	100,439	20.5

the central western and central eastern regions, respectively, which accounted for more than half the total increase on class I railroads. Although the regional allocation by the Interstate Commerce Commission of a particular railroad which serves more than one region is somewhat arbitrary, the figures reflect the expansion of activity in the industrial northeast and in the ship-building and aircraft centers of California and Oregon.

Selected Race and Sex Distributions

The employment of Negroes and of women in industry is of special interest in view of the present labor shortages, since these groups constitute the largest available pools from which new workers may be drawn. An increase in the number of male Negroes in the railroad industry was evident in 1941; they formed 11 percent of the railroad labor force in that year compared with 10 percent in 1940. In the case of women employees, although the number increased in 1941, as a proportion of all employees it declined slightly, from 2.8 percent in 1940 to 2.7 percent.

Male Negroes.—The number of Negro men rose from 159,608 in 1940 to 213,018 in 1941, an increase of 33.5 percent. As may be seen from table 6, an increase occurred for every class of employer.

The largest percentage gains took place in those groups with the greatest advances in total employment, as increasing use was made of Negroes in certain occupations in hiring new workers. Thus, while the increase in total employment on class I railroads was 21 percent, the number of Negroes rose 37 percent. For the smaller switching and terminal companies the corresponding figures were 28 and 20 percent. For every employer group the percentage increase was greater

for Negroes than for all employees; in the case of class II and III railroads the number of Negroes increased 3.5 percent although total employment declined slightly.

Average annual earnings of Negroes were \$685 in 1941 compared with \$703 in the previous year. The average number of months of credited service, however, fell from 8.6 in 1940 to 7.6 in 1941. The decline of 2.6 percent in annual average compensation, compared with a decrease of 11.6 percent in average service, indicates a rise in the amount of compensation per month of service, which advanced from \$82 to \$91.

The increase in employment of Negroes took place for the most part in those occupations in which they are customarily employed in large numbers, namely, the unskilled and semiskilled labor occupations. Because of the widely differing occupational distributions among Negro workers and other employees, which makes a comparison of general averages meaningless, an analysis was made of data for Negro and other employees in occupational groups which include 62 percent of male Negro employees on class I railroads (table 7).

The most striking increase in employment occurred among extra-gang men, where the number of Negroes more than doubled. Among station and platform laborers, 45 percent more Negroes were employed than in 1940.

A comparison of Negroes and other employees with 12 months of service shows an increase in the number of Negroes in each occupation. In maintenance of way—both among extra-gang and

Table 6.—Railroad retirement: Number of male Negroes employed in 1941 and percentage change from 1940 for male Negroes and all employees, by selected classes of employer

Class of employer	Male Negroes			All employees
	Number 1941	Percent of total employees in the group	Percentage change from 1940	
Total.....	213,018	10.6	+33.5	+20.0
Class I railroads.....	174,889	10.2	+37.0	+21.1
Class II and III railroads.....	4,166	10.8	+3.5	-2.1
Switching and terminal companies, class I.....	5,858	11.2	+21.0	+15.4
Switching and terminal companies, other than class I.....	5,916	10.1	+27.7	+20.2
Railway Express Agency.....	4,801	5.5	+17.6	+12.2
Pullman Company.....	12,070	40.4	+12.7	+9.4

¹ Includes 4,409 employees of electric railroads, car loan companies, railroads in Hawaii, labor organizations, railroad associations, and miscellaneous employers.

Table 7.—Railroad retirement: Number of employees of class I railroads, number with 12 months of service, and average credited compensation, for selected occupational group, by race, 1941

Occupational group	All class I employees			Employees with 12 service months			
	Number 1941	Per-cent of total	Per-cent- age change from 1940	Number 1941	Per-cent- age change from 1940	Average credited compensation	
						Amount 1941	Per-cent- age change from 1940
Extra-gang men:							
Male Negroes...	33,851	10.4	+118.5	3,300	+32.5	\$503	+17.6
Other.....	140,653	80.6	+14.3	9,320	+20.1	1,141	+11.3
Other maintenance-of-way laborers:							
Male Negroes...	42,817	17.0	+27.0	17,818	+3.5	917	+20.2
Other.....	200,602	82.4	+18.2	60,505	+3.9	1,121	+13.6
Shop and stores laborers:							
Male Negroes...	21,487	17.8	+25.6	12,831	+1.2	1,185	+13.7
Other.....	99,325	82.2	+53.9	33,869	-0.2	1,307	+13.2
Station-and-plant-form laborers:							
Male Negroes...	33,253	28.8	+45.4	11,947	+3.4	1,166	+12.0
Other.....	82,144	71.2	+50.0	23,702	-3.8	1,469	+14.2

other laborers—the increase for white employees was less than for Negroes; in the other two occupational groups, the number of full-time white workers decreased.

Negro maintenance-of-way laborers showed the greatest percentage increase in annual wages. The increase for extra-gang men was 17.6 percent, for other maintenance-of-way laborers, 20.2 percent, compared with increases of 11.3 and 13.6 percent, respectively, for other employees. The larger percentage increases for the low-paid employees probably reflect the flat increases in wage rates under the emergency wage agreements and the effect of the minimum wage order.

Female white workers.—The number of white women in the railroad industry increased 16 percent—from 47,026 in 1940 to 54,704 in 1941. The increase on class I railroads, which employ 77 percent of all white women in the industry, was 15 percent, and for other classes of employers, 21 percent. The total average annual wage declined 3 percent, from \$1,158 to \$1,123. Average service months per employee decreased 6 percent; in 1941 white women were credited with 9.4 months of service and with 10.0 months in 1940. Again, this decline is attributable to the entrance of new employees in the industry all through the year.

There were no significant changes in the occu-

pational distribution of white women in the industry in 1941, mainly because of their extreme concentration in one occupational group. Almost 70 percent of the number employed on class I railroads are found among clerical employees, a group which includes less than 8 percent of all class I railroad workers. The rise in the number of female employees in that group was the same as for all clerical employees, 15 percent.

Age Distribution, 1940

In lieu of data on the age composition of employees in 1941, which has not yet been tabulated, an analysis of 1940 data has been included to round out this discussion.

The median age in 1940 of the 1,661,866 employees of known age was 42.1 years. About 33 percent were less than 35 years, 49 percent were between 35 and 55, and 18 percent were 55 years or older (table 8).

There are decided differences in the age composition of employees who worked in every month of 1940 and those who worked less than full time. The latter were, in general, much younger. Almost 60 percent were less than 35 years of age as compared with only 18 percent for the steadily employed group. Not quite 10 percent were 55 years of age or older, whereas the corresponding figure for the full-time employees was 23 percent. The median age of workers employed less than 12 months was 31.3 years, fully 15 years less than the median age of steadily employed workers.

Table 8.—Railroad retirement: Number and percentage distribution of railroad employees with specified number of months of service, by age, 1940

Age in 1940	All employees †		Employees with 12 months of service		Employees with less than 12 months of service	
	Number	Per-cent- age distribution	Number	Per-cent- age distribution	Number	Per-cent- age distribution
Total.....	1,661,866	100.0	1,051,699	100.0	610,167	100.0
Median age..	42.1	-----	46.4	-----	31.5	-----
Under 20.....	35,828	2.2	1,034	.2	33,894	5.6
20-24.....	178,220	10.7	34,807	3.3	143,353	23.5
25-29.....	170,928	10.3	63,009	6.0	107,919	17.7
30-34.....	160,021	10.0	90,223	8.6	75,798	12.4
35-39.....	190,677	11.5	127,286	12.1	63,391	10.4
40-44.....	216,000	12.9	160,340	15.2	54,660	9.0
45-49.....	208,386	12.5	107,841	10.0	40,545	6.6
50-54.....	102,988	11.0	160,471	15.3	32,517	5.3
55-59.....	155,401	9.4	130,681	12.4	24,720	4.0
60-64.....	101,785	6.1	83,641	7.9	18,244	3.0
65-69.....	38,602	2.3	26,748	2.5	11,764	1.9
70 and over.....	8,130	.5	4,768	.5	3,372	.6

† Excludes 9,081 employees of unknown age.

A more fundamental determinant of the age distribution of employees is their occupational composition, since the over-all service pattern is a reflection of the individual service characteristics of the various occupations. The relation between age, occupation, and continuity of employment is illustrated in table 9 for class I railroads. As may be expected, the oldest employees were engaged in occupations requiring considerable training and experience and in which employment was relatively stable. Thus, engineers and conductors, averaging 11.5 months of service during the year, constituted the oldest occupational group, with a median age of 56.1 years; 98 percent of them worked in each of the 4 years beginning with 1937, the first year for which compensation and service of all employees were reported to the Board.

The youngest workers, on the other hand, were found in occupations involving little skill and requiring mainly physical strength. The group with the lowest median age, 28.6 years, was the extra-gang men. Twenty percent of this group were continuously employed after 1937, and they averaged only 4.3 months of service in 1940.

The median age of employees of class I railroads who were in continuous service from 1937 to 1940 was 46.9 years—almost 19 years above the average for workers not continuously employed in that period. The reason for this difference is fairly clear. The first group is composed almost entirely of employees with a long period of service in the industry. The younger group, 392,861 employees, includes about 200,000 for whom com-

ensation reports were received by the Board for the first time in 1940. These new entrants, who are much younger than employees with a long service record, brought the median age of the group not continuously employed down below 30 years. In 1940 the median age of new entrants was 26 years.

In 1937 the median age of covered employees was 41.3 years; it increased in 1938 to 43.0 years, declined in 1939 to 42.5 years, and still further in 1940 to 42.1 years. The changes in average age reflect changes in employment in the railroad industry from year to year. During a period of contracting employment, such as occurred in 1938, there is a tendency for the average age of active employees to increase, since younger employees are generally the first to be laid off. Conversely, when employment is expanding, the average age may be lowered because of the influx of new workers.

Although the age characteristics of the railroad population may be modified by the entrance of many employees into military service, withdrawals from the railroad labor force in 1941 because of induction into the armed forces were vastly overshadowed by the large number of employees entering the industry for the first time. It is estimated that less than 30,000 railroad employees entered military service in 1941. In view of the considerable increase in employment, particularly in occupations with a preponderance of young employees, a further reduction in average age probably took place in 1941.

Table 9.—Railroad retirement: Number and median age of employees of class I railroads, by occupational group and employment status in previous years, 1940

Occupational group	All employees ¹			Employees with earnings in each year, 1937-40		Other employees	
	Number	Median age	Average number of months of service	Percent of all employees	Median age	Percent of all employees	Median age
Total.....	1,413,752	42.6	9.5	72.2	46.9	27.8	28.1
Engineers and conductors.....	80,761	56.1	11.5	97.9	56.1	2.1	50.3
Executive, professional, and supervisory.....	75,997	50.1	11.6	96.0	50.5	4.0	33.1
Station agents and telegraphers.....	47,673	49.8	11.3	91.8	50.7	8.2	33.3
Gang foremen.....	43,993	49.6	11.6	96.8	49.9	3.2	38.2
Maintenance of equipment, skilled.....	147,476	48.1	11.2	96.6	48.6	9.4	43.5
Firemen and brakemen.....	182,892	45.6	10.6	83.7	47.1	16.3	32.8
Maintenance of way and structures, skilled.....	31,782	44.0	10.7	86.0	45.6	14.0	26.5
Clerical.....	118,794	41.5	11.2	89.6	42.0	10.4	26.5
Helpers and apprentices.....	105,330	38.7	10.3	74.5	42.6	25.6	28.6
Maintenance of equipment, unskilled.....	81,342	35.9	9.5	64.6	33.1	35.6	27.1
Station and platform laborers.....	76,605	34.5	7.8	51.9	43.0	48.1	27.5
Section men and other maintenance-of-way laborers.....	201,113	33.7	7.2	50.2	40.2	40.8	27.0
Extra-gang men.....	112,233	28.6	4.3	19.8	37.4	80.2	27.0
Not elsewhere classified.....	101,702	39.4	8.6	61.2	45.6	38.8	28.6

¹ Excluding 7,470 employees of unknown age.