

ALASKA POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

This month's "Trends" highlights data recently released in the General Social and Economic Characteristics publication of the 1970 Census. All information here is derived from this publication unless otherwise noted.

Alaska's total population grew by 34 percent during the decade of the sixties, spurred by an expanding economy and the accompanying improvement in the quality of life for many residents of the 49th State. The population of the United States as a whole rose by 14 percent over the period. In terms of numerical change, according to the 1970 census, the State's 1970 population, at 302,361, ^{1/} was 76,006 ahead of the 1960 figure. The largest numerical gains came in the Anchorage, Kenai-Cook Inlet, and Fairbanks labor market areas. However almost all other areas showed gains in population. This is an indication that, although the population of Alaska's urban communities has shown considerable growth, this

growth has not come at the expense of the rural areas. If the State's four largest cities - Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Ketchikan are excluded, the remainder of Alaska's population reflect a healthy 25 percent growth from 1960 to 1970.

In terms of racial mix, whites made up an increased proportion of Alaska's total population (79 percent) when compared with the 1960 figure (77 percent). Various divisions of non-whites either remained the same as in 1960 or showed slight declines. However, all major racial groupings showed absolute increases over the period. The table below gives a breakdown of the change in Alaska's racial composition from 1960 to 1970.

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF ALASKA'S POPULATION 1960-1970 ^{1/}

<u>RACE</u>	<u>1970 ^{2/}</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>% Change 1960-1970</u>	<u>% of Total Pop.</u>	
				<u>1970</u>	<u>1960</u>
White	236,767	174,546	36%	79%	77%
Negro	8,911	6,771	32%	3%	3%
Indian	16,276	14,444	13%	5%	6%
Eskimo & Aleut	34,609	27,571	27%	11%	12%
Chinese, Japan- ese & Filipino	2,411	1,769	36%	1%	1%
Other Race	1,408	1,566	10%	1%	1%
TOTAL	300,382	226,167	33%		100%

^{1/} Courtesy of Dr. Peter Lin, Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, University of Alaska, College.

^{2/} 1970 data not corrected for errors found subsequent to publication.

^{1/}This is a corrected figure. Data on components of Alaska's population shown in attached tables are based on an uncorrected State total of 300,382.

In terms of trends indicated by the above data, perhaps the most obvious is that the white population experienced a greater increase over the 10 year period than did the non-white population. This is especially interesting in view of the fact that Alaska's non-whites experienced a substantially higher birth rate than did white Alaskans' (around 40 percent for Natives vs. 24 percent for whites). This gain in population among whites is we believe, explainable by a number of factors.

First, although the Native birth rate was high the death rate for this group was also substantial. The mortality figure for Natives hovered around 10 percent until 1966 and was still around 7.3 percent in 1970. The white death rate during the decade varied between 3.8 percent and 4.7 percent.

Secondly, the economic expansion undergone by the State over the past decade has created a substantial number of jobs in virtually all sectors of the State's labor market. Because these jobs required skills and education which were in most cases not possessed by Alaska's non-whites, and because qualified white, new entrants to the work force could absorb only a small proportion of the opportunities, a steady in-migration of white workers from outside Alaska resulted.

Thirdly, the lower growth rate for Alaska natives vs. the white population may to some extent reflect actual undercounts of this group by census enumerators. Undercounts of rural Natives could have occurred as a result of the isolated nature of many bush settlements. This isolation may have caused some settlements to be missed entirely or else counted when a large portion of the population was engaged in seasonal activities, such as hunting and fishing, and therefore absent from the village. Undercounts in urban areas would have occurred among natives who, seeking a better life have migrated there over from their home villages. This migration has created a large predominantly native floating population in Alaska's larger cities, particularly Anchorage. These people lead a kind of "shadow existence" in that they have no roots (i.e. no job, no permanent place of residence). Because of this it is entirely possible that a great majority of them were never reached by enumerators during the 1970 census.

Sex and Age Distribution: In terms of distribution of sex and age, the most noticeable trend was the

nearly 41 percent increase in the number of females in Alaska's population. This contrasts with a 27 percent growth in the male population. This higher level of growth among the fair sex has tended to bring the number of females more into balance with the male population. However, in spite of this leveling tendency, men still substantially outnumber women in Alaska's population. In 1960, females comprised 43 percent of the total population. By 1970, in spite of the high rate of increase among females, their share of the total had only risen to about 46 percent. Alaska's population appears to be getting younger. Data from the 1970 census indicates that 55 percent of all Alaskans were 24 years of age or younger vs. 53 percent in 1960.

Migration Patterns: As noted above, the past decade has seen a movement of persons from rural to urban areas of the State. In 1960, 38 percent of all Alaskans lived in urban areas of the State. By 1970, 48 percent of the total population resided in and around the State's major towns. This growth reflects the demographic tendency for people to congregate around areas of maximum economic activity.

However, as urban areas have grown in population, the distribution of population within them has changed. This change has resulted in cities showing a smaller population growth than the communities that surround them. In 1960, 52 percent of Alaska's population resided in places of 25,000 or more compared with 33 percent in 1970. From this it appears that Alaska's urban areas are beginning to experience a trend that has long been noted by demographers and city planners in the Lower 48. That trend is for middle class and upper income residents to shun the central cities in favor of suburban bedroom communities. If this is occurring in Alaska's urban areas, it may ultimately result in the creation of low income ghettos, particularly in Anchorage and Fairbanks, as poor and disadvantaged natives from rural areas replace the well-to-do whites, who have moved to the suburbs.

There has also been a migration of outsiders into the State during the past decade. These have been primarily skilled workers and administrators drawn to Alaska by expansion in various sectors of the economy, which has created a demand for occupational skills not present in the indigenous labor force. Specific instances where this has occurred have been the oil boom in the Kenai-Cook Inlet area during the early part of the 1960's and more recently

a similar but larger flurry of activity surrounding oil discoveries on the North Slope.

OSHA INFORMATION

Beginning in February, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and cooperating States will be surveying some of the employers covered by the William-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). In Alaska approximately 100 employers will be reached by this survey and were so notified in December.

The purpose of the Williams-Steiger Act is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for the nation's wage earners. The provisions of the law apply to every employer engaged in a business affecting commerce. Each employer has the responsibility to provide employment conditions and place of employment free from hazards likely to cause physical harm. The employer has the specific duty to comply with safety and health standards promulgated under this Act. Each employee has the duty to comply with these standards, and all rules, regulations, and orders issued pursuant to the Act.

Each year only a portion of the nation's employers will be surveyed although nearly all employers will be required to keep employee occupational injury and illness records at the location where the employee usually reports to work. Employers should already have received their booklets from the Bureau of Labor Statistics which include the three basic records (log, supplementary record and summary) on which to record the required employee data. During February, those employers in the survey will receive an additional form on which to report employee injuries and illnesses recorded since July 1971, to the Department of Labor.

The new Alaska Workmen's Compensation report Form No. 07-ADL210 R/12-71 may be used as a substitute for the OSHA supplementary record. Employers may request copies of this form from the Alaska Workmen's Compensation Board, Box 1149, Juneau, or the Department of Labor offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Obviously, a comprehensive statistical and research program is necessary to implement the requirements of OSHA. Data are needed initially to provide the Secretary of Labor information that describes the safety record of American industry in 1971, the first year after the passage of the Act. A continuing statistical and research program is essential to provide data needed by the Secretary of Labor for the administration of the inspection, enforcement, and standards development provisions of the Act; for the evaluation of progress in reducing work injuries and

illnesses; and for inclusion in the Secretary's annual report to Congress.

A Federal-State cooperative program is planned as the best means of eliminating unnecessary duplication of efforts and minimizing the burden upon employers. To encourage this cooperation, a comprehensive program of technical assistance and financial support will be provided states in planning and operating their statistical programs.

Since the Department of Labor is the administrative agency for the Act in Alaska, employers who have not received the BLS booklet or need assistance concerning it should contact:

Alaska Department of Labor
Research and Analysis Section
Box 3-7000
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(Phone 586-1347)

ALASKA'S ECONOMY IN DECEMBER

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT: Total estimated employment decreased seasonally during December as 2,100 fewer persons were employed in relation to November estimates. Employment has shown modest growth during 1971, increasing 3.5% or 3,600 positions. The employment increases are concentrated in government, trade, and services categories, and hence the overall employment picture is only mildly encouraging. No substantial growth trend is seen in any Alaskan industry, only mild expansion due to an increasing population. Largest losses during December were in the construction and logging industries.

Mining: The seasonal drop in mining employment continued during December, but at a rather slow rate as the industry approached the lower limits of employment. Approximately 100 positions were lost over-the-month. The lack of activity on the North Slope has dropped estimated employment 500 positions below 1970 levels.

Construction: The month of December saw a continued rapid decline in employment in this industry as 1,200 positions were eliminated, a 21% decline. As in mining, employment in construction is lower than in the comparable month of 1970, down by 600.

Manufacturing: Employment in this industry is declining slowly due to seasonal and extenuating factors. Normal declines were noted in the logging, lumber and pulp and other manufacturing sectors, but a decline in food processing was not expected.