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PERSONAL INCOME UNCHANGED IN 1958 DESPITE BUSINESS DOWNTURN

(Advance data, March 1959 sample survey)

In 1958, the average income of men and women remained at the same level as in 1957 in spite of the decline in economic activity which extended over most of the year, according to estimates released today by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce.

The average (median) income of men, which had been rising steadily between 1954 and 1957, leveled off at $3,700 in 1957 and 1958. The proportion of men whose incomes were $5,000 or more increased by 2 percent over the year to a new record level of 32 percent. In 1945, at the close of World War II, only 5 percent of men had incomes that high.

Among women, the average income in 1958 was estimated at $1,200, about the same as it had been in the preceding year. Since 1945 the average income of women has increased by about $275, or 31 percent, while that of men has more than doubled during the same period.

The stability in average income between 1957 and 1958, despite sizable unemployment and a shorter average workweek, is attributable in part to continuing advances in the earnings of workers who obtained wage increases under long-term agreements concluded prior to 1958 or as a result of wage contracts negotiated during the year. In fact, among men who worked at full-time jobs for 50 weeks or more the average income rose in 1958 to $4,900, a gain of about $230, or 5 percent over the previous year. The proportion of men with income who worked full time throughout the year, however, dropped from 61 percent in 1957 to 57 percent in 1958. All other male workers had an average income of $2,000, about the same as it had been in the preceding two years. As might be expected, the income of men who did not work at all but depended entirely upon pensions, dividends, public assistance, or other such sources was relatively unchanged. The median income of men who did not work in 1958 was about the same ($1,100) as in 1957.

The average income of men who were unemployed during the survey week (in March 1959) was estimated at about $2,100 in 1958, a drop of 20 percent from the previous year when the average was $2,700. This decline in the income of the unemployed was closely related to the marked increase in the duration of unemployment during 1958.

The over-all picture--little change in the average income of all men and women--was also repeated in the figures for residence and major occupation groups. The average income of nonfarm residents and of workers in all major occupation groups (excluding men employed in salaried professional jobs) did not change in 1958. An apparent increase in the median income of men living on farms from $1,600 in 1957 to $1,700 in 1958 does not represent a statistically significant change. However, other evidence indicates that there was an increase in the net income of farm operators partly because of increased receipts from the sale of farm products.

The 1958 income statistics presented in this report were obtained from the Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 1959. Additional income data from the survey for persons and families will appear in more detailed reports to be issued later this year. Other data relating to the income received by the population are available from the personal income series of the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture's farm income series, the Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances, Federal income tax data, and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance wage record data. These data are collected for

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different purposes and, therefore, differ in several important respects. A discussion of the comparability of these data may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 30, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1957."

Information on income was collected in the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey from the civilian noninstitutional population and members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post in continental United States. Since the estimates are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. Particular care should be used in interpreting medians and other figures when based on relatively small numbers of cases, as well as small differences between figures. Moreover, as in all field surveys of income, the figures are subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Income as defined in this report represents total money income, or the sum of money wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income other than earnings. The median income is the amount which divides the income distribution of persons into two equal groups, one group having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below the median. The medians are based on the income distribution of persons who received some income during the calendar year.

This report covers money income only, prior to deductions for taxes. Inasmuch as farmers typically receive an important part of their livelihood in the form of goods produced and consumed on the farm rather than in money, this factor should be taken into consideration in comparing the income of farm and nonfarm residents.

In comparing income data for 1958 with those for previous years, one should take account of the fact that changes in income were accompanied by changes in prices. Therefore, an increase or a decrease in income does not necessarily represent a similar change in economic well-being.

DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS 14 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME, BY SEX, FOR THE UNITED STATES, FARM AND NONFARM: 1945 AND 1956 TO 1958

Total money income	Both sexes				Male				Female			
	1958	1957	1956	1945	1958	1957	1956	1945	1958	1957	1956	1945
UNITED STATES												
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent with income	70.9	71.4	71.1	65.3	91.3	91.8	91.9	89.5	52.7	52.6	51.9	45.1
Percent without income	29.1	28.6	28.9	34.7	8.7	8.2	8.1	10.5	47.3	47.4	48.1	54.9
Percent of those with income	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Loss	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1
$1 to $499	16.2	15.7	15.8	18.7	9.0	8.5	8.4	11.6	27.3	26.8	27.3	30.3
$500 to $999	11.8	12.3	12.5	19.4	7.4	8.1	8.1	16.5	18.7	18.7	19.3	24.3
$1,000 to $1,499	8.3	8.2	8.0	15.9	6.7	6.5	6.2	13.8	10.6	10.8	10.6	19.4
$1,500 to $1,999	6.7	6.7	6.8	12.8	5.6	5.2	5.5	12.2	8.5	9.1	8.7	13.8
$2,000 to $2,499	6.9	7.3	7.4	10.8	6.0	6.4	6.4	13.2	8.3	8.8	9.0	7.0
$2,500 to $2,999	5.5	5.6	6.1	7.7	5.2	5.2	5.7	10.7	5.9	6.1	6.7	2.7
$3,000 to $3,499	6.5	6.9	7.0	5.7	6.5	6.9	7.4	8.4	6.6	6.9	6.5	1.1
$3,500 to $3,999	5.6	5.9	6.3	3.1	6.5	6.8	7.4	4.8	4.4	4.4	4.5	0.3
$4,000 to $4,499	6.2	6.4	6.8	1.5	7.9	8.4	9.2	2.3	3.5	3.2	3.0	0.2
$4,500 to $4,999	4.8	4.9	4.6	1.0	6.6	6.9	6.7	1.5	1.9	1.7	1.3	0.2
$5,000 to $5,999	8.2	8.3	7.8	1.6	12.1	12.5	11.9	2.4	2.2	1.9	1.5	0.1
$6,000 to $9,999	10.1	9.0	8.1	0.8	15.7	14.1	12.7	1.3	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.1
$10,000 and over	2.7	2.4	2.3	0.5	4.4	3.7	3.6	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1
Median income for persons with income	$2,474	$2,452	$2,432	$1,360	$3,742	$3,684	$3,608	$1,811	$1,176	$1,199	$1,146	$901
URBAN AND RURAL NONFARM												
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent with income	71.6	72.2	71.8	67.4	91.9	92.3	92.4	90.5	54.0	54.0	53.3	48.8
Percent without income	28.4	27.8	28.2	32.6	8.1	7.7	7.6	9.5	46.0	46.0	46.7	51.2
Median income for persons with income	$2,734	$2,702	$2,680	$1,478	$4,050	$3,986	$3,899	$2,042	$1,283	$1,302	$1,257	$962
RURAL FARM												
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent with income	65.8	65.8	65.7	55.8	87.8	88.5	88.8	85.3	42.6	40.9	40.8	27.6
Percent without income	34.2	34.2	34.3	44.2	12.2	11.5	11.2	14.7	57.4	59.1	59.2	72.4
Median income for persons with income	$1,178	$1,083	$1,029	$765	$1,699	$1,570	$1,461	$904	$476	$467	$468	$431

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