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CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

CONSUMER INCOME

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INCOME OF MEN AT ALL-TIME HIGH IN 1956

(Advance data, March 1957 sample survey)

Men's incomes reached a new record level in 1956 but the income of women was about unchanged, according to estimates released today by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. The average (median) income of men was $3,600 in 1956, a gain of about $250 over the previous year. Among women, the average (median) income in 1956 was $1,100, about the same as it had been in the preceding four years.

Since the close of World War II, the average income of men has virtually doubled. The proportion of men whose incomes were $5,000 or over rose from only 5 percent in 1945 to about 24 percent in 1955 and 28 percent in 1956. In contrast, the average income of women has increased by about $250, or only 27 percent, since 1945. Wage rates have increased sharply for women as well as for men during the postwar period. However, the effect of these wage increases for women has been partly offset by the rising proportion of women who work only part of the year.

This over-all picture--sharp income gains among men but little change among women--was also repeated in the figures for both farm and nonfarm residents. The median income of men living on farms rose by $140 to $1,500 between 1955 and 1956, reversing at least temporarily the generally downward trend observed in this sector during the past several years. This does not necessarily indicate a pickup in income from agriculture, since a large and growing percentage of farm residents derive at least part of their receipts from nonfarm work and other sources. Among nonfarm residents, the average income of men advanced by $250 to $3,900 in 1956, continuing the almost unbroken rise recorded for this group since World War II.

The 1956 income statistics presented in this report were obtained from the Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 1957. 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 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 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. 23, "Income of Persons in the United States: 1955."

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

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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 1956 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: 1956, 1955, AND 1945

Total money income	Both sexes			Male			Female		
	1956	1955	1945	1956	1955	1945	1956	1955	1945
UNITED STATES									
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent with income	70.4	69.2	65.3	91.6	91.8	89.5	51.8	49.2	45.1
Percent without income	29.6	30.8	34.7	8.4	8.2	10.5	48.2	50.8	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
Loss	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.1
$1 to $499	15.8	15.8	18.7	8.4	8.5	11.6	27.3	27.7	30.3
$500 to $999	12.5	12.8	19.4	8.1	8.8	16.5	19.3	19.3	24.3
$1,000 to $1,499	8.0	8.7	15.9	6.2	7.0	13.8	10.6	11.6	19.4
$1,500 to $1,999	6.8	7.0	12.8	5.5	5.8	12.2	8.7	9.0	13.8
$2,000 to $2,499	7.4	7.9	10.8	6.4	7.0	13.2	9.0	9.4	7.0
$2,500 to $2,999	6.1	6.3	7.7	5.7	6.2	10.7	6.7	6.4	2.7
$3,000 to $3,499	7.0	7.7	5.7	7.4	8.2	8.4	6.5	7.0	1.1
$3,500 to $3,999	6.3	6.5	3.1	7.4	8.3	4.8	4.5	3.7	0.3
$4,000 to $4,499	6.8	6.5	1.5	9.2	8.9	2.3	3.0	2.6	0.2
$4,500 to $4,999	4.6	4.6	1.0	6.7	6.9	1.5	1.3	0.8	0.2
$5,000 to $5,999	7.8	6.9	1.6	11.9	10.3	2.4	1.5	1.2	0.1
$6,000 to $9,999	8.1	6.8	0.8	12.7	10.5	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.1
$10,000 and over	2.3	1.9	0.5	3.6	2.9	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1
Median income for persons with income	$2,432	$2,323	$1,360	$3,608	$3,354	$1,811	$1,146	$1,116	$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
Percent with income	71.1	69.9	67.4	92.0	92.2	90.5	53.2	50.7	48.8
Percent without income	28.9	30.1	32.6	8.0	7.8	9.5	46.8	49.3	51.2
Median income for persons with income	$2,680	$2,570	$1,478	$3,899	$3,652	$2,042	$1,257	$1,225	$962
RURAL FARM									
Total persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent with income	64.8	64.7	55.8	88.6	89.6	85.3	40.8	38.4	27.6
Percent without income	35.2	35.3	44.2	11.4	10.4	14.7	59.2	61.6	72.4
Median income for persons with income	$1,029	$1,000	$765	$1,461	$1,339	$904	$468	$473	$431