

Much of the variation in voluntary mobility between industries is attributable to factors other than pensions, of course, but the insignificant gross correlation between pension coverage and voluntary mobility suggests that pensions cannot be a major factor relative to the other causes of differential mobility.

SUMMARY

The direct evidence available is quite limited and does not provide unequivocal support for the effect of pensions on mobility. Both the Parnes and BLS studies contradict the proposition. Considering the palpable inadequacies of these studies, however, this would not be very important if the BES study uniformly supported the proposition. Only a naive interpretation of the data lends support to the proposition. All that can be said is that there is a strong simple correlation between low quit rates and the presence of pensions, but that we recognize that the partial correlation might be small if other variables were included in the analysis.

IV. TRENDS IN LABOR MOBILITY AND JOB TENURE

Recent changes in mobility have been influenced by changes in economic conditions. Occupational mobility during the depression decade of the 1930's was markedly lower than during the prosperous decade of the 1940's. Manufacturing quit rates were low during the 1930's but high in the prosperous 1920's and 1940's. Judging by these rates, there has been a long-term downtrend in mobility, but the trend has been reversed during periods of marked prosperity.³¹

MANUFACTURING QUIT RATE

Most of the discussion of trends in labor mobility has centered on trends in manufacturing quit rates, which have, heretofore, been the only long statistical series of comparable observations. Evaluation of trends in manufacturing quit rates must include consideration of the level of unemployment. Even when this factor is taken into account, however, it appears that quit rates during the relatively prosperous years of 1951-53, 1955-57, and 1963-65 did not approximate the very high quit rates of the World War II period.

The downtrend in the quit rate has been explained in terms of the following influences:

1. Growth of unions
2. Development of seniority provisions
3. Development of fringe benefits (especially pensions)
4. Government and supplementary unemployment benefits
5. Growth of large corporations
6. Aging of the labor force
7. Stability of manufacturing employment.

³¹ Some of the principal articles discussing the downtrend in mobility are Ewan Clague, "Long-Term Trends in Quit Rates," *Employment and Earnings*, December 1956; Arthur M. Ross, "Do We Have a New Industrial Feudalism?" *American Economic Review*, December 1958; Joseph Shister, "Labor Mobility: Some Institutional Aspects," Industrial Relations Research Association, *Proceedings*, 1950; Paul F. Brissenden, "Labor Mobility and Employee Benefits," *Labor Law Journal*, November 1955.