

other hand, it is the source of jobs for a huge number of persons throughout the nation who would otherwise remain unemployed or be out of the labor force.

The ease with which persons without prior skill or experience can be employed and trained facilitates the development of the chronic overcapacity characteristic of the industry. Underemployment is therefore quite general, even in periods of relative prosperity. As a result, the unemployment rate in the industry is typically much higher than for all workers in the economy or those who are employed in manufacturing. The unemployment rate for garment workers does, of course, fluctuate with changes in general economic conditions as does the rate for workers in all manufacturing. During the period under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, when the general economy grew at a much faster pace than in the immediately preceding years, this improvement was reflected in the unemployment rate for the apparel industry as well as other industries. However, as can be seen from data on the rate of unemployment of experienced workers or workers covered by unemployment compensation (see Annexes M and N), the ratio of apparel unemployment to that of manufacturing has been rising in recent years. This suggests the possibility that the relative severity of unemployment in apparel when matched against unemployment in manufacturing as a whole is rising. The increase in apparel imports which has been taking place in recent years seems the most plausible explanation.