

wage rates in our classifications than that of the building laborers'. Be that as it may, the gross earnings of a building laborer, for eight hundred fifteen (815) hours of covered employment, the average in Table I, above, would be \$3,072.55; barely above the generally accepted poverty level. Again, eliminating those covered employes with five hundred eighteen (518) hours or less, we find that the average earnings of our members rises to \$5,142.88; considerably better than the overall average, but still not a generous return from what is supposedly a full-time occupation. This level of earnings, incidentally, is a bit more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000,000) below the average earnings for all construction employees.

It is not our intent to present a statistical statement to this Committee. However, one further result of our survey throws some light on an aspect of the seasonality problem which we mentioned earlier in this Statement. Our survey reinforces the conclusion that seasonality in construction employment is not entirely a function of weather. Table II clearly shows, by comparing the hours worked by covered employees under our health and welfare programs on a regional basis, that there is very little difference between the number of hours worked by our members North or South, East or West. Only the figures from the West Coast, which include Southern California, show any significant deviation from the eight hundred (800) hours described as the average for our membership in Table I.

TABLE II.—AVERAGE HOURS WORKED, BY REGION, 1966

	Covered workmen	Total hours	Average hours
Northeast.....	16,895	14,659,786	868
Middle Atlantic.....	27,959	21,894,104	783
Midwest.....	40,578	27,636,008	681
South Central.....	14,962	10,841,198	725
West Coast.....	36,782	37,027,224	1,007
Southwest.....	1,085	566,491	522
Total.....	138,261	112,624,811	815

This bears out the experience of many countries that have attempted to develop construction seasonality programs. It is clear that a major problem, in addition to technological solutions to weather imposed shut-downs, is to overcome a certain inertia in the habits of the construction industry. Inertia which effects not only employers in the industry, but the buyers of construction work.

Thus, we can see that seasonality in the construction industry levies a staggering cost on a laborer and condemns him, through no fault of his own, to a marginal participation in what we in this Country have come to consider the "good life". The Laborers' International Union gives its most ardent support to any effort by the Federal Government to eliminate this evil factor in the lives of our membership. These efforts will not only benefit our membership, but will rebound to the benefit of the economy as a whole, which must now bear the cost of this criminal waste of the skills, ability and willingness to work of millions of Americans.

For the remainder of this Statement, we would like to touch upon some aspects of seasonality as it affects the operation of the construction industry, the costs of construction work and manpower policies established by Congress.

Seasonality imposes both a public and private loss on the American economy which, we must confess, is beyond our ability to measure accurately, but which we submit amounts to millions of dollars in direct operating costs and lost income to construction contractors, construction workers, construction buyers and Government, at all levels of the State and Federal System.

Consider, to begin with, the construction contractor who operates a business having year around costs on the income that he must generate in six (6) to eight (8) months of feverish activity. His highly expensive equipment continues to depreciate at all seasons of the year, his insurance costs continue, he must maintain his offices and, should he have employees in his construction force whom he deems it desirable to keep, he must continue to pay them during the off-season. Extending the construction season would not only permit him to spread these costs over a longer period each year, but would reduce his in-put into specific projects by eliminating the seasonal gaps which now exist between the starting of a major construction project and its completion and delivery to-