

This PDF is a selection from an out-of-print volume from the National Bureau of Economic Research

Volume Title: The Growth of Public Employment in Great Britain

Volume Author/Editor: Moses Abramovitz and Vera F. Eliasberg

Volume Publisher: Princeton University Press

Volume ISBN: 0-87014-059-0

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/abra57-1>

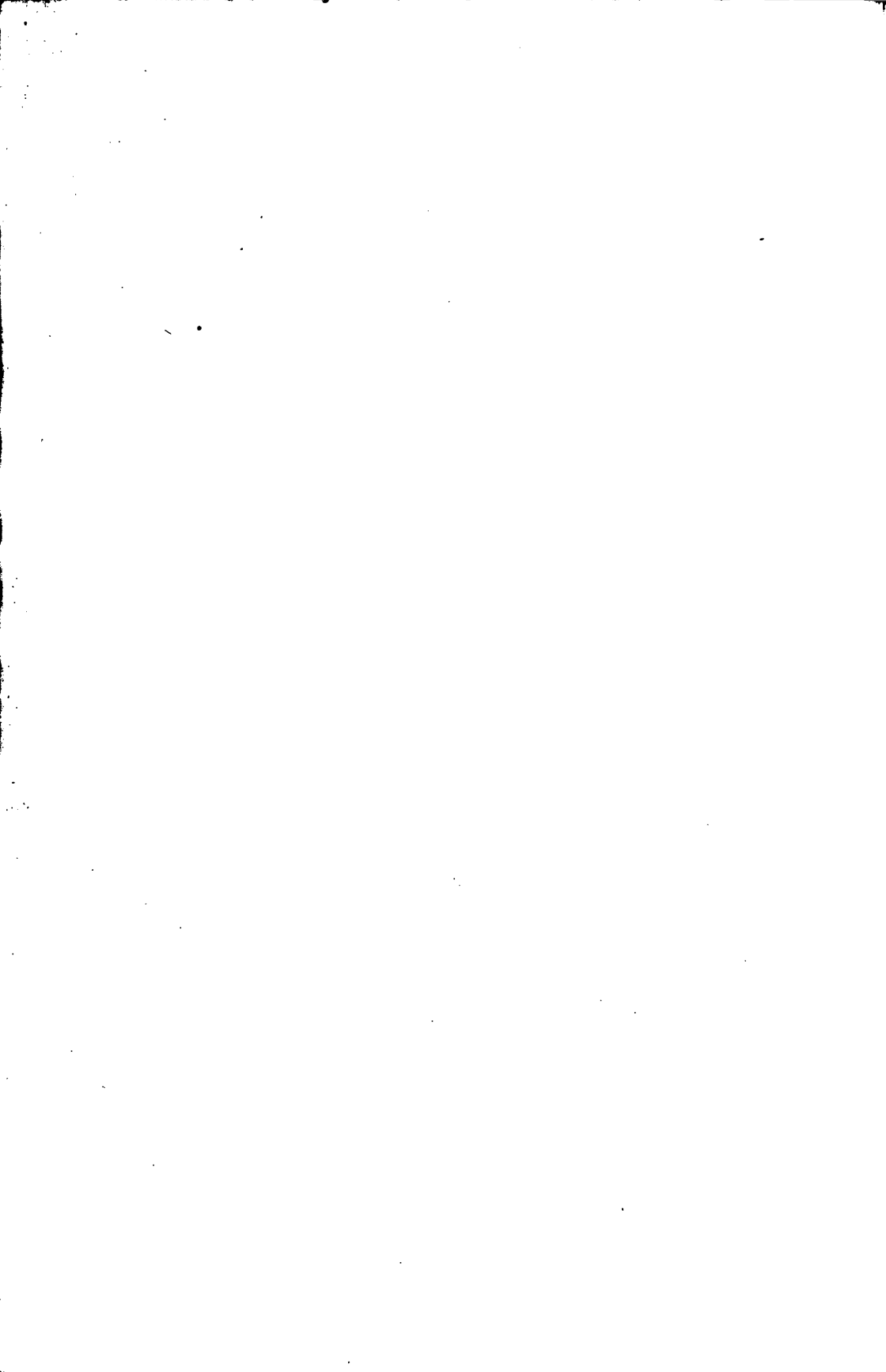
Publication Date: 1957

Chapter Title: Front matter, The Growth of Public Employment in Great Britain

Chapter Author: Moses Abramovitz, Vera F. Eliasberg

Chapter URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2651>

Chapter pages in book: (p. -16 - 0)





THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
IN GREAT BRITAIN

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

NUMBER 60, GENERAL SERIES

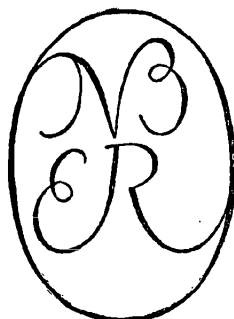
The Growth of Public Employment in Great Britain

MOSES ABRAMOVITZ

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

VERA F. ELIASBERG

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH



A STUDY BY THE
NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, NEW YORK

PUBLISHED BY
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, PRINCETON

1957

Copyright © 1957, by Princeton University Press
London: Oxford University Press
All Rights Reserved
L.C. CARD 57-5443

Printed in the United States of America
by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

1956

OFFICERS

Harry Scherman, *Chairman*
Gottfried Haberler, *President*
George B. Roberts, *Vice-President and Treasurer*
W. J. Carson, *Executive Director*

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Wallace J. Campbell, *Director, Cooperative League of the USA*
Solomon Fabricant, *New York University*
Albert J. Hettinger, Jr., *Lazard Frères and Company*
Oswald W. Knauth, *Beaufort, South Carolina*
H. W. Laidler, *Executive Director, League for Industrial Democracy*
Shepard Morgan, *Norfolk, Connecticut*
George B. Roberts, *Vice-President, The First National City Bank of New York*
Beardsley Ruml, *New York City*
Harry Scherman, *Chairman, Book-of-the-Month Club*
George Soule, *Bennington College*
N. I. Stone, *Consulting Economist*
J. Raymond Walsh, *New York City*
Joseph H. Willits, *Director, The Educational Survey, University of Pennsylvania*
Leo Wolman, *Columbia University*
Donald B. Woodward, *Vick Chemical Company*
Theodore O. Yntema, *Vice-President-Finance, Ford Motor Company*

DIRECTORS BY UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT

E. Wight Bakke, <i>Yale</i>	Gottfried Haberler, <i>Harvard</i>
Arthur F. Burns, <i>Columbia</i>	Clarence Heer, <i>North Carolina</i>
Melvin G. de Chazeau, <i>Cornell</i>	R. L. Kozelka, <i>Minnesota</i>
G. A. Elliott, <i>Toronto</i>	C. Arthur Kulp, <i>Pennsylvania</i>
Frank W. Fetter, <i>Northwestern</i>	T. W. Schultz, <i>Chicago</i>
H. M. Groves, <i>Wisconsin</i>	Jacob Viner, <i>Princeton</i>

DIRECTORS APPOINTED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Percival F. Brundage, *American Institute of Accountants*
Harold G. Halcrow, *American Farm Economic Association*
S. H. Ruttenberg, *Congress of Industrial Organizations*
Murray Shields, *American Management Association*
Boris Shishkin, *American Federation of Labor*
Willard L. Thorp, *American Economic Association*
W. Allen Wallis, *American Statistical Association*
Harold F. Williamson, *Economic History Association*

RESEARCH STAFF

Solomon Fabricant, <i>Director of Research</i>	
Geoffrey H. Moore, <i>Associate Director of Research</i>	
Moses Abramovitz	John W. Kendrick
Morris A. Copeland	Simon Kuznets
David Durand	Clarence D. Long
Richard A. Easterlin	Ruth P. Mack
Milton Friedman	Ilse Mintz
Raymond W. Goldsmith	G. Warren Nutter
Millard Hastay	Lawrence H. Seltzer
W. Braddock Hickman	George J. Stigler
Daniel M. Holland	Leo Wolman
Thor Hultgren	Herbert B. Woolley

**RELATION OF THE DIRECTORS
TO THE WORK AND PUBLICATIONS
OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH**

1. The object of the National Bureau of Economic Research is to ascertain and to present to the public important economic facts and their interpretation in a scientific and impartial manner. The Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the work of the National Bureau is carried on in strict conformity with this object.

2. To this end the Board of Directors shall appoint one or more Directors of Research.

3. The Director or Directors of Research shall submit to the members of the Board, or to its Executive Committee, for their formal adoption, all specific proposals concerning researches to be instituted.

4. No report shall be published until the Director or Directors of Research shall have submitted to the Board a summary drawing attention to the character of the data and their utilization in the report, the nature and treatment of the problems involved, the main conclusions and such other information as in their opinion would serve to determine the suitability of the report for publication in accordance with the principles of the National Bureau.

5. A copy of any manuscript proposed for publication shall also be submitted to each member of the Board. For each manuscript to be so submitted a special committee shall be appointed by the President, or at his designation by the Executive Director, consisting of three Directors selected as nearly as may be one from each general division of the Board. The names of the special manuscript committee shall be stated to each Director when the summary and report described in paragraph (4) are sent to him. It shall be the duty of each member of the committee to read the manuscript. If each member of the special committee signifies his approval within thirty days, the manuscript may be published. If each member of the special committee has not signified his approval within thirty days of the transmittal of the report and manuscript, the Director of Research shall then notify each member of the Board, requesting approval or disapproval of publication, and thirty additional days shall be granted for this purpose. The manuscript shall then not be published unless at least a majority of the entire Board and a two-thirds majority of those members of the Board who shall have voted on the proposal within the time fixed for the receipt of votes on the publication proposed shall have approved.

6. No manuscript may be published, though approved by each member of the special committee, until forty-five days have elapsed from the transmittal of the summary and report. The interval is allowed for the receipt of any memorandum of dissent or reservation, together with a brief statement of his reasons, that any member may wish to express; and such memorandum of dissent or reservation shall be published with the manuscript if he so desires. Publication does not, however, imply that each member of the Board has read the manuscript, or that either members of the Board in general, or of the special committee, have passed upon its validity in every detail.

7. A copy of this resolution shall, unless otherwise determined by the Board, be printed in each copy of every National Bureau book.

*(Resolution adopted October 25, 1926 and revised February 6, 1933
and February 24, 1941)*

P R E F A C E

WORK on this study began in September 1951. A brief preliminary report of its results was made in a paper presented to the American Economic Association in December 1952. The first draft of the full report was completed at the same time, and this explains the fact that, in general, our review of the trend of government employment in Great Britain stops with 1950. Successive revisions and other work have prevented publication until the present time. Although some important changes in the size of British government staffs, particularly of the central government staff, have occurred since 1950, they have hardly altered the character of the long-term trends which it is the main purpose of the book to describe. Some of the more striking developments since 1950 in the size and functions of the central government staff are described in Chapter 4.

Investigators who study the history of a foreign country are especially dependent on the help of knowledgeable critics. Our study was read by Solomon Fabricant, Daniel M. Holland, M. Slade Kendrick, and George Stigler, of the research staff of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and by three of the Bureau's directors, E. Wight Bakke, H. W. Laidler, and Clarence Heer. We are grateful to all these reviewers for useful suggestions.

The manuscript was also read by Professor Harold Barger of Columbia University, Professor Samuel J. Hurwitz of Brooklyn College, and Mr. Alan T. Peacock of the London School of Economics and Political Science. We are particularly indebted to these readers whose more intimate knowledge of Britain and of the recent history of the British government and its social policy enabled us to eliminate many errors and to sustain a certain confidence in the general reliability of our treatment. Needless to say, none of our readers are in any way responsible for the failings that may still mark our work.

We should also like to record a serious debt to the staff of the British Information Services in New York. Their advice, patiently and freely given, widened our knowledge of sources and warned us of pitfalls in their use. The files and shelves of their library held a rich and convenient collection of data.

PREFACE

The manuscript benefited from the editorial advice of Ellen V. Seiler. Our charts were prepared by H. Irving Forman.

Moses Abramovitz
Vera F. Eliasberg

July 10, 1956

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
1. The Measure of Government	3
2. Government in Nineteenth Century Great Britain	8
The Adaptation of Government to Industrialization	8
Changes in the Size and Composition of Government Employment	15
Political and Ideological Brakes on the Expansion of Government	18
3. The British Government since 1890: A General View	24
4. The British Central Government, 1890-1950	33
From 1890 to 1914	33
From 1914 to 1933	39
Since 1933	51
The Changing Character of the British Central Government	62
5. Local Governments, 1890-1950	67
The Main Trend of Local Government Employment	67
A Classification of Local Government Functions	71
1. Protective Services	72
2. Environmental Services	73
3. Personal Social Services	75
4. Trading Services	79
The Major Functions and the General Trend of Local Government Employment	81
The Drift Toward Centralization	83
6. The Nationalized Industries and Services	85
Employment in the Nationalized Industries	85
Background of the Recent Nationalization Acts	88
Industries and Banking	88
The Health Service	94
7. Comparison of Government Employment in Great Britain and the United States, 1900-1950	98
Comparability of the Data	100
Total Government Employment	103

CONTENTS

Distribution of Employment by Level of Government	109
Growth of Employment by Function	113
National Defense	113
The Post Office	115
Education	116
The Other Functions of Central and Local Govern- ment	124
Appendix: Sources and Notes to Tables	134
Index of Persons and Government Agencies	149

T A B L E S

1. Total Government Employment and Working Population, Selected Years, 1891-1950	25
2. Central Government Full-Time and Part-Time Employment as Shown by Census Data, 1891-1951	34
3. Central Government Employment, Established Civil Service Only, 1902, 1911, 1914	37
4. Central Government Employment, Selected Years, 1914-1950	40
A. Full-Time Equivalent Workers	40
B. Departmental Staffs as a Percentage of Total Central Government Employment	44
C. Departmental Staffs as a Percentage of Total Working Population	45
5. Changes in Central Government Employment between August 1914 and April 1933	49
6. Changes in Central Government Employment, April 1933 to April 1955	52
7. Central Government Employment, 1914 and 1950	63
8. Local Government Staffs, Selected Years, 1891-1950	70
9. Nationalized Industries and Services, Employment in 1950	85
10. Total Government Full-Time and Part-Time Employment, and Distribution among Main Types of Government Unit, in Great Britain and the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	101
11. Population and the Number of Government Employees per 100 Persons in Great Britain and in the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	107
12. Share of Central Government in Total Government Employment in Great Britain and in the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	112

TABLES

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 13. British and American Post Office Staffs, and American Telephone and Telegraph Workers, Selected Years, 1900-1950 | 117 |
| 14. Measures Bearing on the Use of Manpower for Education, Great Britain and the United States, 1900 and 1950 | 119 |
| 15. Government Employment excluding Defense, Post Office, and Education as a Percentage of Total Employment in Great Britain and the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950 | 126 |

C H A R T S

1. Number of Government and Other Public Workers (including Military Personnel) by Main Types of Governmental Unit, Selected Years, 1891-1950	27
2. Government and Other Public Workers as a Percentage of the Labor Force, Selected Years, 1891-1950	28
3. Number of Civilian Central Government Workers Employed in Various Functions, Selected Years, 1914-1950	46
4. Percentage Distribution of Civilian Central Government Workers among Main Functional Divisions, Selected Years, 1914-1950	47
5. Number of Local Government Workers Employed in Various Functions, Selected Years, 1891-1950	71
6. Percentage Distribution of Local Government Workers among Main Functional Divisions, Selected Years, 1891-1950	73
7. Number of Government Workers in Great Britain and the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	104
8. Government Workers as a Percentage of All Employed Workers in Great Britain and the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	105
9. Percentage Distribution of All Government Workers among Main Types of Governmental Unit in Great Britain, Selected Years, 1901-1950	110
10. Percentage Distribution of All Government Workers among Main Types of Governmental Unit in the United States, Selected Years, 1900-1950	111

