

THE  
**MINISTRY OF LABOUR**  
**GAZETTE**

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

VOL. XXXIV.—No. 7.]

JULY, 1926.

[PRICE SIXPENCE NET.]

**EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, COST OF LIVING, AND TRADE DISPUTES IN JUNE.**

EMPLOYMENT.

EMPLOYMENT in June continued to be seriously affected by the coal-mining stoppage and the consequent shortage of fuel and power. In most of the large coal-consuming industries employment remained bad, and in many industries—notably iron mining, pig-iron, iron and steel, tinplate, and pottery manufacture and shipbuilding—a large number of works were either idle or only partially working. In the building trades and in agriculture, however, employment was generally good with skilled workers; and it was fairly good in certain sections of the printing and clothing trades.

Among the workpeople (numbering approximately 11,900,000) insured against unemployment under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the percentage unemployed at 21st June, 1926, was 14·7,\* as compared with 14·5\* at 24th May, 1926, and 11·9 at 22nd June, 1925. Among the members of those trade unions from which returns were received, the percentage unemployed was 12·9 at the end of June, 1926, compared with 13·2 at the end of May, 1926, and with 12·3 at the end of June, 1925. The total number of applicants for employment registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland at 28th June, 1926, was approximately 1,699,000, of whom 1,262,000 were men and 346,000 were women, the remainder being boys and girls; at 31st May, 1926, it was 1,675,000, of whom 1,246,000 were men and 333,000 were women; and at 29th June, 1925, it was 1,368,000, of whom 1,062,000 were men and 241,000 were women. The figures relating to May, 1926, and June, 1926, are exclusive of workpeople in the coal-mining industry who ceased work on account of the dispute.

WAGES.

In the industries for which statistics are regularly compiled by the Department the changes in rates of wages reported to have come into operation during June resulted in a reduction of about £17,000 in the weekly full-time wages of about 162,000 workpeople, and in an increase of nearly £1,900 in those of about 23,000 workpeople.

The largest group of workpeople affected by reductions were boot and shoe operatives, the great majority of whom sustained reductions of 1s. to 4s. a week in the case of time-workers and of 2½ per cent. on list prices in the case of piece-workers. Electric cable makers sustained reductions of 1s. 11½d. or 2s. a week

\* These percentages include coal mining, those miners who were not disqualified for benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Acts by reason of the dispute being taken as unemployed for the purpose of the percentage, but not those who ceased work owing to the dispute. In other industries (excluding coal mining) the percentage of unemployment at 21st June was 15·3, as compared with 15·1 at 24th May.

in the case of men and of 1s. in the case of women. Other important bodies of workpeople whose wages were reduced included steel sheet millmen and galvanisers in various districts, blastfurnace workers in Cumberland and North Lancashire, and workpeople in the preparing and spinning departments of the linen industry in Northern Ireland.

The increases in wages affected principally iron ore miners in Cumberland, and workers engaged in civil engineering construction in Great Britain generally.

During the first six months of 1926, the changes reported to the Department, in the industries for which statistics have been compiled, have resulted in net increases amounting to £16,500 in the weekly full-time wages of 135,000 workpeople, and in net reductions of £69,500 in those of 658,000 workpeople.

COST OF LIVING.

At 1st July the average level of retail prices of all the commodities taken into account in the statistics compiled by the Ministry of Labour (including food, rent, clothing, fuel, light and miscellaneous items) was approximately 70 per cent. above that of July, 1914, as compared with 68 per cent. a month ago and 73 per cent. a year ago. The corresponding figures for food alone were 61, 58 and 67 respectively.

The rise in the percentage increase for the food group of items since 1st June was seasonal, being due to the displacement of old potatoes by new potatoes at higher prices; the prices of other articles of food showed, on average, very little change. As regards other commodities, the average price of coal continued to advance, but there were no other important changes in the retail prices of the articles included in the statistics.

These statistics are designed to indicate the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-war standard of living of working-class families, and accordingly, in making the calculations, the changes in the prices of the various items included are combined in proportions corresponding with the relative importance of those items in pre-war working-class family expenditure.

TRADE DISPUTES.

The general stoppage of work in the coal-mining industry, which began on 1st May, continued throughout June and involved about 1,075,000 workpeople in that industry in a loss of about 23,350,000 working days during the month.

Apart from this, the number of trade disputes, involving stoppages of work, reported to the Department as beginning in June was 10; in addition, 21 disputes which began before June were still in progress at the beginning of the month. The total number of workpeople involved in these 31 disputes (including those thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, though not themselves parties to the disputes) was about 7,000, and the estimated aggregate duration of such disputes during June was about 37,000 working days.

## THE GENERAL STRIKE.

The coal-mining dispute of 1921 was terminated (see the July, 1921, issue of this GAZETTE, pages 336-7) by the signing of an agreement between the miners and the mineowners, providing for the automatic regulation of wages from one period to another on the basis of the ascertained costs of production, proceeds, etc., in an earlier period. In January, 1924, the Miners' Federation gave three months' notice to the Mining Association to terminate the agreement of 1921. In June, 1924, after prolonged negotiations, a new agreement was made, which was, in the main, more favourable to the men; but not long after the new agreement came into force, the industry entered upon a period of very severe depression; and on 30th June, 1925, the owners gave the miners one month's notice to terminate the agreement.

On 30th July the Prime Minister offered financial assistance to the industry until 30th April, 1926, to allow time for a full investigation to be made; and on the following day (when the owners' notices to the men would otherwise have expired) the terms were accepted, and arrangements were made for work to be continued. The total cost of the subvention, from the beginning of August, 1925, to the end of April, 1926, was £23,350,000.

On 5th September, 1925, a Royal Commission was appointed, under the Chairmanship of Sir Herbert Samuel, G.B.E., "to inquire into and report upon the economic position of the coal industry and the conditions affecting it, and to make any recommendations for the improvement thereof." The Royal Commission presented their report on 6th March, 1926.\*

Discussions were entered upon between the parties, assisted by the Government, but no agreement was reached as to the terms on which the mines should be operated after 30th April. In the circumstances the mineowners, on 15th April, gave formal notice to the effect that the existing contracts would terminate on 30th April, and that new terms of employment would come into operation on and after 1st May. In the meantime negotiations on the new terms took place, but no agreement was arrived at.

In view of the deadlock which had been reached in the negotiations between the Mining Association and the Miners' Federation, a Committee (called the Industrial Committee) of the Trades Union Congress General Council met the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and the Secretary for Mines on 26th April and asked that they would take steps to bring the parties together for the resumption of negotiations. A meeting between the parties was effected on April 28th and the Prime Minister afterwards informed the Industrial Committee of the position.

On April 23rd a communication had been addressed by Mr. Pugh, Chairman, and Mr. Citrine, Acting Secretary, of the Trades Union Congress General Council, to the secretaries of all affiliated societies inviting the executives of the societies to a meeting on 29th April in order that a report on the position might be presented and the situation considered. This conference took place in London and the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"That this Conference endorses the efforts of the General Council to secure an honourable settlement of the differences in the Coal-mining Industry. It further instructs the Industrial Committee of the General Council to continue its efforts and declares its readiness for the negotiations to continue, provided that the impending lockout notice of the mine workers is not enforced.

"That this Conference hereby adjourns until to-morrow and agrees to remain in London to enable the General Council to consult, report and take instructions."

This resolution was conveyed to the Prime Minister in the evening and the position was further discussed. On the following morning the employers made new proposals, which were transmitted by the Prime Minister to the miners' representatives, together with an indication of the action which the Government proposed to take in respect of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. While these proposals were under the consideration of the Miners' Federation, the Industrial Committee asked that steps might be taken to secure the withdrawal of the owners' notices, and some discussion took place on the subject of the authority of the Committee in relation to the Miners' Federation. Later in the afternoon the reply of the Miners' Federation was received and discussions took place between representatives of the Government, the Industrial Committee and the Miners' Federation. A deadlock was reached and this was reported to the Miners' Delegate Conference and to the Conference of Trade Union Executives. During the day a statement was published by the Trades Union Congress General Council giving their view of the position.

On Saturday morning, 1st May, the Conference of Trade Union Executives considered the following proposals for the co-ordinated action of Trade Unions, which had previously been circulated, and a resolution endorsing them was carried by 3,653,527 votes to 49,511.

## 1. SCOPE.

The Trades Union Congress General Council and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain having been unable to obtain a satisfactory settlement of the matters in dispute in the coal-mining industry, and the Government and the mineowners having forced a lock-out, the General Council, in view of the need for co-ordinated action on the part of affiliated unions in defence of the policy laid down by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, directs as follows:—

*Trades and Undertakings to Cease Work.*

Except as hereinafter provided, the following trades and undertakings shall cease work as and when required by the General Council:—

*Transport*, including all affiliated unions connected with transport, i.e., railways, sea transport, docks, wharves, harbours, canals, road transport, railway repair shops and contractors for railways, and all unions connected with the maintenance of, or equipment, manufacturing, repairs, and groundsmen employed in connection with air transport.

*Printing Trades*, including the Press.

*Productive Industries*:—

(a) Iron and steel. (b) Metal and heavy chemicals group.

Including all metal workers and other workers who are engaged, or may be engaged, in installing alternative plant to take the place of coal.

*Building Trade*.—All workers engaged on building except such as are employed definitely on housing and hospital work, together with all workers engaged in the supply of equipment to the building industry, shall cease work.

*Electricity and Gas*.—The General Council recommend that the trade unions connected with the supply of electricity and gas shall co-operate with the object of ceasing to supply power. The Council request that the executives of the trade unions concerned shall meet at once with a view to formulating common policy.

*Sanitary Services*.—The General Council direct that sanitary services be continued.

*Health and Food Services*.—The General Council recommend that there should be no interference in regard to these, and that the trade unions concerned should do everything in their power to organise the distribution of milk and food to the whole of the population.

With regard to hospitals, clinics, convalescent homes, sanatoria, infant welfare centres, maternity homes, nursing homes and schools, the General Council direct that affiliated unions take every opportunity to ensure that food, milk, medical and surgical supplies shall be efficiently provided.

## 2. TRADE UNION DISCIPLINE.

(a) The General Council direct that, in the event of trade unionists being called upon to cease work, the trade unions concerned shall take steps to keep a daily register to account for every one of their members. It should be made known that any workers called upon to cease work should not leave their own district and by following another occupation, or the same occupation in another district, blackleg their fellow workers.

(b) The General Council recommend that the actual calling out of the workers should be left to the unions, and instructions should only be issued by the accredited representatives of the unions participating in the dispute.

## 3. TRADES COUNCILS.

The work of the trades councils, in conjunction with the local officers of the trade unions actually participating in the dispute, shall be to assist in carrying out the foregoing provisions, and they shall be charged with the responsibility of organising the trade unionists in dispute in the most effective manner for the preservation of peace and order.

## 4. INCITEMENT TO DISORDER AND SPIES.

A strong warning must be issued to all localities that any person found inciting the workers to attack property, or inciting the workers to riot, must be dealt with immediately. It should be pointed out that the opponents will in all probability employ persons to act as spies and others to use violent language in order to incite the workers to disorder.

## 5. TRADE UNION AGREEMENTS.

The General Council further direct that the executives of the unions concerned shall definitely declare that in the event of any action being taken and trade union agreements being placed in jeopardy, it be definitely agreed that there will be no general resumption of work until those agreements are fully recognised.

## 6. PROCEDURE.

(a) These proposals shall be immediately considered by the executives of the trade unions concerned in the stoppage, who will at once report as to whether they will place their powers in the hands of the General Council and carry out the instructions which the General Council may issue from time to time concerning the necessary action and conduct of the dispute.

(b) And, further, that the executives of all other affiliated unions are asked to report at once as to whether they will place their powers in the hands of the General Council and carry out the instructions of the General Council from time to time, both regarding the conduct of the dispute and financial assistance.

A. PUGH, Chairman.

April 30th. WALTER M. CITRINE, Acting Secretary.

The announcement was then made by the Council that if a settlement of the dispute had not been reached no worker who was called upon to take part in the stoppage should go to work after the night shift on Monday night. At the same time an offer was made to "distribute essential foodstuffs, organised under a voluntary arrangement by the Trade Unions." This offer was not accepted by the Government.

Following upon a communication from the Trades Union Congress that their representatives were ready to meet the representatives of the Government for further consideration of the mining deadlock, negotiations were continued until Sunday evening, and at a late hour the miners' representatives (who had left London) were again in consultation with the representatives of the Trades Union Congress. In the meantime, reports as to developments in connection

with the general strike had reached the Government, and late on Sunday night, the following letter, on behalf of the Government, was communicated to the Trades Union Congress General Council.

"His Majesty's Government believe that no solution of the difficulties in the coal industry which is both practical and honourable to all concerned can be reached except by sincere acceptance of the Report of the Commission. In the expression 'Acceptance of the Report' is included both the reorganisation of the industry, which should be put in hand immediately, and, pending the results of reorganisation being attained, such interim adjustment of wages or hours of work as will make it economically possible to carry on the industry in the meantime.

"If the miners, or the Trades Union Committee on their behalf, were prepared to say plainly that they accept this proposal, the Government would have been ready to resume the negotiations and to continue the subsidy for a fortnight. But, since the discussions which have taken place between Ministers and members of the Trades Union Committee, it has come to the knowledge of the Government, not only that specific instructions have been sent (under the authority of the executives of the trade unions represented at the conference convened by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress) directing their members in several of the most vital industries and services of the country to carry out a general strike on Tuesday next, but that overt acts have already taken place, including gross interference with the freedom of the Press. Such action involves a challenge to the constitutional rights and freedom of the nation.

"His Majesty's Government, therefore, before it can continue negotiations, must require from the Trades Union Committee both a repudiation of the actions referred to that have already taken place and an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the instructions for a general strike."

The reply of the General Council was as follows:—

"Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 3rd inst., announcing the Government's decision to terminate the discussion which had been resumed on Saturday night, was received by the General Council with surprise and regret. The negotiations which had taken place between the Industrial Committee of the General Council and representatives of the Cabinet had been adjourned for a brief period in order to allow the Industrial Committee to confer with the full General Council and representatives of the Miners' Federation who were on your premises in order to advance the efforts which the Industrial Committee had persistently been making to accomplish a speedy and honourable settlement of the mining dispute. The Trade Union representatives were astounded to learn that, without any warning, renewed conversations which it was hoped might pave the way to the opening up of full and unfettered negotiations had been abruptly terminated by the Government for the reasons stated in your communication.

The first reason given is that specific instructions have been sent, under the authority of Trade Unions represented at the conference convened by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, directing their members in several industries and services to cease work. We are directed to remind you that there is nothing unusual for workmen to cease work in defence of their interests as wage-earners, and that the specific reason for the decision in this case is to secure for the mine workers the same right from the employers as is insisted upon by employers from workers, namely, that negotiations shall be conducted free from the atmosphere of strike or lock-out. This is the principle which Governments have held to be cardinal in the conduct of industrial negotiations.

With regard to the second reason, that overt acts have already taken place, including gross interference with the freedom of the Press, it is regretted that no specific information is contained in your letter. The General Council had no knowledge of such acts having occurred, and the decisions taken by them definitely forbid any such independent and unauthorised action. The Council is not aware of the circumstances under which the alleged acts have taken place. It cannot accept any responsibility for them, and is taking prompt measures to prevent any acts of indiscipline. The Council regrets that it was not given an opportunity to investigate and deal with the alleged incidents before the Government made them an excuse for breaking off the peace discussions which were proceeding. The public will judge the nature of the Government's intention by its precipitate and calamitous decision in this matter, and will deplore with the General Council that the sincere work which the General Council had been engaged in to obtain an honourable settlement has been wrecked by the Government's unprecedented ultimatum.

Yours faithfully,  
(Signed) ARTHUR PUGH (Chairman).  
W. M. CITRINE (Acting Secretary)."

On 1st May a state of emergency had been declared by Royal Proclamation in accordance with the Emergency Powers Act, and the various civil commissioners arrived at their posts to administer the Emergency Regulations. On 2nd May a call for volunteers for the maintenance of essential services was issued by the Home Secretary and broadcast. On the 3rd May began the formation of local committees of the unions involved in the Strike with a view to co-ordinating local action. The General Strike was declared as from the night of Monday, 3rd May, but instructions sent to the unions left it to each organisation to arrange the exact time of stoppage of their members in order to allow for each man to stop work at the moment most convenient for himself and suitable for his occupation.

On 4th May, as a result of the strike orders, the great majority of railway, dock, tramway and omnibus workers ceased work, and

goods transport by road was also seriously affected. In other industries than transport, large numbers of workpeople struck in the iron and steel and other metal trades, the paper and printing trades, and the building and allied trades. Work was continued in the gas industry, but in a large number of electricity power stations the operatives ceased work. By the aid, however, of the technical staffs, who remained at work throughout the country, and of volunteers and naval ratings, the supply of electricity was generally maintained throughout the strike.

Industrial undertakings were adversely affected in a few districts as the result of the refusal of Borough Councils to permit the supply of electricity for power purposes, but it was found necessary only in one case (St. Helens) for the Government to take charge of a power station for the purpose of enabling the requirements of the public to be supplied. With regard to other public services, volunteers were enrolled in large numbers, and soon after the strike commenced the railways were able to arrange services for the carrying of passengers, which improved as more trained volunteers became available. In London and other places increasing services of omnibuses were arranged, and in some cases the tram services were also resumed. Special arrangements for the distribution of the London milk supply were made by the establishment of depots in Hyde Park and elsewhere and by the use of motor services. In a short time, however, the improvement of the railway facilities enabled the special arrangements for milk to be dispensed with to a great extent, and generally the facilities for the transport of passengers and of food, petrol and other essential commodities were adequate, and supplies were satisfactorily maintained throughout the country. Special difficulties existed at the London Docks, and on 8th May and succeeding days work was commenced under protection, and food was removed under military escort.

All the London newspapers and most of the provincial papers ceased to appear, or appeared in an attenuated form, but the position in regard to these improved after some days. In view of this situation the Government commenced, on 5th May, to publish a newspaper, the *British Gazette*, and this continued throughout the strike. On 6th May and succeeding days a newspaper, the *British Worker*, was published by the Trades Union Congress General Council.

On Monday, 10th May, a telegram was sent by the Industrial Committee of the Trades Union Congress to affiliated unions in the engineering and shipbuilding trades to the effect that, unless otherwise ordered, they should refrain from starting work on 12th May, this order not to apply to men in His Majesty's Dockyards, Admiralty and Government engineering establishments. Before the effect of these instructions was clear the general strike was called off.

In the meantime, on Tuesday, 11th May, Mr. Justice Astbury had given judgment in an action brought to restrain the officials of a branch of the National Sailors and Firemen's Union from calling out members on strike without the prior authority of the Executive Council of the Union, a ballot of whose members was in progress but had not been completed. In his judgment, Mr. Justice Astbury found that, since no ballot had been completed, there could, under the rules, be no strike at present, and granted an injunction. In the course of his judgment he expressed the view that the general strike called by the General Council was "illegal and contrary to law, and those persons inciting to or taking part in it are not protected by the Trade Disputes Act of 1906." Later, the result of the seamen's ballot, showing a majority against a strike, was declared.

On Wednesday, 12th May, following conversations in regard to the coal-mining dispute which had taken place between Sir Herbert Samuel (Chairman of the recent Coal Commission) and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, Sir Herbert Samuel wrote the following letter to Mr. Pugh, enclosing a memorandum embodying conclusions which had been reached:—

"Dear Mr. Pugh,—As the outcome of the conversations which I have had with your committee, I attach a memorandum embodying the conclusions that have been reached. I have made it clear to your committee from the outset that I have been acting entirely on my own initiative, have received no authority from the Government, and can give no assurances on their behalf. I am of opinion that the proposals embodied in the memorandum are suitable for adoption, and are likely to promote a settlement of the differences in the coal industry. I shall strongly recommend their acceptance by the Government when the negotiations are renewed.

Yours, etc.,  
HERBERT SAMUEL."

The following reply to this letter was immediately sent:—

"Dear Sir,—The General Council having carefully considered your letter of to-day and the memorandum attached to it, concurred in your opinion that it offers a basis on which the negotiations upon the conditions in the coal industry can be renewed. They are taking the necessary measures to terminate the general strike, relying upon the public assurances of the Prime Minister as to the steps that would follow. They assume that during the resumed negotiations the subsidy will be renewed, and that the lock-out notices to the miners will be immediately withdrawn.

Yours, etc.,  
ARTHUR PUGH (Chairman).  
WALTER M. CITRINE (Acting Secretary)."

On the morning of the same day (May 12th) members of the Trades Union Congress General Council met the Prime Minister at Downing Street, and informed him that they had decided to terminate the strike. Meanwhile, on the same day, at the close of a meeting of the Miners' Executive, an official statement was made by Mr. A. J. Cook, Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, in

\* See the March, 1926, issue of this GAZETTE, page 80.

















In the blanket manufacturing section the depression noted in May continued in Yorkshire. At Witney the blanket mills resumed full-time working at the end of the month.

In the flannel section at Rochdale and Saddleworth there was a slight improvement. With woollen workers at Stockport employment declined, much short time being worked owing to the shortage of coal.

Employment at Trowbridge was good, and better than in May. In the Scottish tweed trade a few firms were working to their full capacity, but most firms were on short time or had only part of their machinery running. Several mills at Peebles and Innerleithen were fairly well employed. At Dumfries employment showed an improvement.

The woollen factories in South Cardiganshire, with one exception were practically closed.

Employment in the carpet industry was bad at Halifax, where two-thirds of the operatives were working only three days a week. It was also bad in the Kidderminster district; there, too, most of the operatives were on short time.

The following Table shows, for the principal districts and departments of the industry, the percentage changes between the week ended 22nd May and that ended 26th June in the numbers of workpeople employed and in the total wages paid by firms from whom information has been obtained:—

Table showing percentage changes in workpeople and wages for various departments and districts. Includes sections for Worsteds, Woollens, Carpets, and Districts.

In the worsted section of the industry, taken as a whole, the returns received from employers showed that 56 per cent. of their workpeople were on short time in the week ended 26th June, to the extent, on the average, of about 15 hours each.† In the woollen section the returns showed that in the same week about 48 per cent. of the workpeople were on short time, to the extent of about 13 hours on the average.† In the carpet section, the employers'

\* Most of the districts are indicated by the names of their principal towns, but neighbouring towns and areas are included in each case. † See note \* on previous page.

returns showed that about 72 per cent. of the operatives were on short time, to the extent of 16½ hours each, on the average. The corresponding particulars for overtime were 2½ per cent., averaging 6 hours each, in the worsted section, and 3 per cent., averaging 9 hours each, in the woollen section.

The following Table shows the numbers of men and of women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in the principal wool textile trade centres at the 21st June, 1926:—

Table showing numbers of men and women on registers of Employment Exchanges in principal wool textile trade centres at 21st June, 1926.

The following Table shows the increases and decreases as compared with the 24th May, 1926:—

Table showing increases and decreases in workpeople and wages compared with 24th May, 1926.

The imports (less re-exports) of raw wool (sheep's or lambs') were 44,285,000 lbs. in June, 1926, compared with 60,206,200 lbs. in May, 1926, and with 40,060,900 lbs. in June, 1925.

The exports of woollen and worsted yarns were 3,639,400 lbs. compared with 2,183,800 lbs. in May, 1926, and with 2,923,500 lbs. in June, 1925.

The exports of woollen and worsted tissues were 12,634,800 square yards, compared with 9,719,600 square yards in May, 1926, and 15,507,200 square yards in June, 1925.

The exports of blankets were 74,056 pairs, 66,771 pairs and 66,452 pairs in June, 1926, May, 1926, and June, 1925.

COTTON INDUSTRY.

OWING largely to the effect of the coal mining stoppage employment was bad in the cotton industry in June, and worse than in the previous month; it was much worse than a year ago. In accordance with the recommendation of the Master Cotton Spinners' Federation, all mills spinning American cotton were working only alternate weeks from the 14th June; less than half time on the average was, in fact, worked in this section during the period. The Egyptian spinning branch was less severely affected, though here also production was somewhat curtailed owing to restrictions on the consumption of coal. The weaving section was also severely affected by the shortage of coal.

The percentage of insured workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 25.0 on the 21st June, 1926, as compared with 26.5\* on the 24th May, 1926, and with 8.7 on the 22nd June, 1925.

In the Oldham, Ashton, Stockport and Stalybridge districts employment with spinners continued very bad; it was worse than in May, and considerably worse than a year ago. The further curtailment of hours in the American section (i.e., the system of working alternate weeks, equivalent to a reduction from 35 to 24 hours per week on the average) was in force to a great extent from the 14th June; and some mills were stopped entirely. Employment was also very bad in the weaving section, especially with velvet weavers.

At Bolton employment was described as moderate with spinners and as bad with card room workers and weavers. At Leigh and at Chorley employment with spinners was described as fair, but not so good as in May; at Bury and Rochdale it was bad. In Yorkshire employment with spinners was very bad, and showed a further decline.

\* Affected by extended stoppages at Whitsun.

In all the principal weaving centres employment was severely affected by the coal shortage, and also (especially with weavers of the coarser fabrics) by the bad state of trade. In the Burnley district most mills were closing alternate weeks, owing to the restrictions on coal consumption and to lack of orders; some firms, however, which had stocks of coal in hand, were permitted to exceed the prescribed allowance during the last half of the month in view of the approach of the Burnley Fair holiday, which began on the 3rd July. At Nelson some mills stopped for a week at a time. At Blackburn and Accrington also employment was seriously affected by trade depression (especially with weavers of plain calicoes and printing cloths) and by lack of fuel; and there was a marked decline at Darwen, due to coal shortage and bad trade. Here also firms were endeavouring to keep running in view of the approach of the local holidays in July. At Preston many of the mills which stopped at Whitsuntide have only been working about five days a fortnight since, and a considerable number of weavers in the mills that were open were under-employed; this was partly due to the shortage of fuel but partly also to lack of orders. At Todmorden some improvement was reported as compared with a month earlier, partly owing to the use of oil fuel.

The following Table summarises the information received from those employers who furnished returns for the three periods under review:—

Table summarising information received from employers for three periods: Week ended 26th June, 1926; Month ago; Year ago. Includes sections for Departments and Districts.

Returns from firms employing about 68,700 workpeople in the week ended 26th June showed that over 35 per cent. of these workpeople were on short time in that week, to the extent of about 18 hours on the average.

The following Table shows the number of men and of women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in the principal cotton trade centres at 21st June, 1926:—

Table showing numbers of men and women on registers of Employment Exchanges in principal cotton trade centres at 21st June, 1926.

The following Table shows the increases and decreases as compared with 24th May, 1926:—

Table showing increases and decreases in workpeople and wages compared with 24th May, 1926.

The imports (less re-exports) of raw cotton (including cotton linters) were 95,963,900 lbs. in June, 1926, compared with 99,732,500 lbs. in May, 1926, and with 61,715,200 lbs. in June, 1925.

The exports of cotton yarn were 14,442,600 lbs. in June, 1926, compared with 10,579,000 lbs. in May, 1926, and with 13,272,800 lbs. in June, 1925.

The exports of cotton piece goods were 328,311,000 square yards as compared with 304,213,500 square yards in the previous month, and with 337,963,300 square yards in June, 1925.

BOOT AND SHOE INDUSTRY.

EMPLOYMENT in this industry was poor, especially in the heavy boot trade, and worse than a year ago; and in nearly all localities a great deal of short time was worked. Difficulties of transport in some centres, together with a fairly widespread curtailment of power supplies, restricted employment. As has been the case for many months, employment was worse in the heavy boot factories than in those producing medium and light footwear.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 13.6 on 21st June, as compared with 19.5 on 24th May, and with 10.2 on 22nd June, 1925.

Returns from firms employing nearly 50,000 workpeople in the week ended 26th June, 1926, showed an increase of 0.6 per cent. in the numbers employed as compared with the corresponding week of the previous month and a decrease of 1.5 per cent. as compared with June, 1925. The total wages paid by these firms showed a decrease of 2.7 per cent. in June, 1926, as compared with the previous month and a decrease of 8.6 per cent. as compared with June, 1925.

In London employment was fair on the whole, though not so good as a year ago. At Leicester there was a decline, and most factories were on irregular short time or were working only three days a week. At Northampton, on the other hand, the power supplies were generally sufficient, and factories maintained, on the average, almost two-thirds of their normal output, with a few firms working full time. In the Higham and Rushden area, where also the power supply was generally fairly good, employment partly recovered from the low level of the previous month; but the majority of factories were still on short time. Employment in the Wellingborough district was poor, and worse than in May; there was an increase in the numbers totally unemployed, while those at work were almost all on short time. The majority of firms at Kettering worked short time, often only half time; and employment was poor.

At Stafford, the majority of firms were on short time, but there was little total unemployment. At Norwich conditions varied greatly, some firms being well employed, but on the whole employment showed a decline, and many of the workpeople were on short time. There was a marked improvement in the Bristol and Kingswood area, although employment, largely owing to the restrictions on coal and power consumption, was still poor; it was worse than a year ago, especially in the heavy boot trade. At Leeds there was a severe decline, and much short time was worked; the heavy boot trade was very depressed, but employment in factories making lighter footwear was fair, although hampered by the rationing of power supplies. Employment was somewhat better than in May in the Rossendale Valley; at Bacup the factories were busy, and little short time was worked.

There was a further increase in short time working in Scotland; employment was very slack at Glasgow, Dundee and Arbroath, and was quiet at Edinburgh. At Aberdeen a slight improvement was reported, and at Kilmarnock employment was reported as still fairly good.

The following Table summarises the information received from those employers who furnished returns for the three periods under review:—

Table summarising information received from employers for three periods: Week ended 26th June, 1926; Month ago; Year ago. Includes sections for England and Wales, Scotland, and Great Britain.

Returns from firms employing 41,300 workpeople showed that 55 per cent. of these workpeople were on short time in the week ended 26th June, losing, on the average, about 13 hours each.

\* Comparison of earnings is affected by changes in rates of wages.





NUMBERS INSURED AND PERCENTAGES UNEMPLOYED.

Table with columns: INDUSTRY, ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INSURED PERSONS AT JULY, 1925 (Males, Females, Total), PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 21ST JUNE, 1926 (Wholly Unemployed, Temporary Stoppages, Total), INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) IN TOTAL PERCENTAGES AS COMPARED WITH 24TH MAY, 22ND JUNE, 23RD JUNE, 1926, and GREAT BRITAIN ONLY TOTAL PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 21ST JUNE, 1926.

\* The figures for May and June, 1926, are exclusive of persons in the coal mining industry who ceased work on account of the dispute which commenced on 1st May.

Table with columns: INDUSTRY, ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INSURED PERSONS AT JULY, 1925 (Males, Females, Total), PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 21ST JUNE, 1926 (Wholly Unemployed, Temporary Stoppages, Total), INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) IN TOTAL PERCENTAGES AS COMPARED WITH 24TH MAY, 22ND JUNE, 23RD JUNE, 1926, and GREAT BRITAIN ONLY TOTAL PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 21ST JUNE, 1926.

\* These percentages include coal-mining, those miners who were not disqualified for benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Acts by reason of the dispute being taken as unemployed for the purpose of the percentage, but not those who ceased work owing to the dispute. If coal-mining were excluded the percentage of unemployment in other trades at 21st June would be Males, 16.5; Females, 12.2; Total 15.3, as compared with 16.2, 12.7 and 15.1 respectively at 24th May, 1926. The percentage for Great Britain only at 21st June, exclusive of coal-mining, is 15.0, compared with 14.9 at 24th May, 1926.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES.

At 28th June, 1926, the total number of persons on the registers of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain was 1,639,776; in Great Britain and Northern Ireland it was 1,698,832.

Comparative figures for men, boys, women and girls separately, for 31st May and 28th June are given below\* :-

Table with columns: 31st May, 1926, 28th June, 1926, and sub-columns for Persons normally in regular employment, Wholly Unemployed, Persons normally in Casual Employment, and Total. Rows include Men, Boys, Women, Girls, and Total for Great Britain and Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The following Table gives particulars relating to certain branches of the work of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the four weeks ended 28th June, 1926. Of the 88,579 vacancies filled, 44,408 were for men, 27,479 for women, and 16,692 for juveniles :-

Table with columns: Week ended, Applications from Employers (During Week, At end of Week), Vacancies Filled, and Number of Work-people on Registers. Rows include 31st May, 1926 and 7th June, 1926.

\* The figures include all workpeople on the Registers of Exchanges with the exception of those who ceased work in the coal-mining industry on account of the dispute. They include persons "suspended" or "stood off," and those who, although employed on a basis of systematic short time, were not actually at work on the date in question.

† "Vacancies filled" include certain types of cases (described as Class B placings) in which the work of the Exchanges was limited; for instance, obtaining for an employer former employees, or placing the same men on relief works in alternate weeks. During the three weeks ended 24th May, 1926, the average number of such placings was 6.06 per week. The average number of placings of casual workers, such as dock labourers and coal porters, during the four weeks ended 28th June, 1926, was 450 per week.









BUILDING PLANS APPROVED.

RETURNS have been received from 140 Local Authorities in Great Britain giving the estimated cost of buildings for which plans were passed during the second quarter of 1926.

Table with columns: District and Aggregate Population (at Census of 1921) of Towns from which returns have been received, Dwelling Houses, Factories and Workshops, Shops, Offices, Warehouses, and other Business Premises, Churches and Public Buildings, Other Buildings, Additions and Alterations to Existing Buildings, TOTAL.

(a) SECOND QUARTER OF 1926.

Table showing estimated cost of buildings for the second quarter of 1926 across various regions like England and Wales, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, etc.

(b) SECOND QUARTER OF 1925.

Table showing estimated cost of buildings for the second quarter of 1925 across various regions like England and Wales, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, etc.

ASSISTED PASSAGES UNDER THE EMPIRE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1922.

The number of assisted passages granted during June, 1926, in connection with agreed schemes under the Empire Settlement Act, and the total number of such passages granted from the inception of these schemes, together with the number of departures during the same periods, are shown in the following Table:-

Table with columns: Assisted Passage Schemes, Assisted Passages Granted in June, 1926, Total Assisted Passages Granted (1922 to June, 1926), Departures in June, 1926, Total Departures (1922 to June, 1926).

The figures given include both applicants and dependants of applicants to whom assisted passages have been granted.

\* Particulars are not available for the London County Council Area. † Revised figures.

RETAIL PRICES OVERSEAS.

[N.B.—While the percentages given in the following Summary Tables are derived from the most authoritative sources of statistical information, certain differences in the nature and scope of the data used, in the methods of combining such data and in the periods for which the rise is measured, suggest the need for caution in drawing conclusions from a comparison between the figures for any two countries or cities.

I.—FOOD.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN RETAIL FOOD PRICES IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES AS COMPARED WITH JULY, 1914.\*

Table showing percentage increase in retail food prices for various countries like United Kingdom, Foreign Countries (Czechoslovakia, Denmark, etc.), British Dominions, etc., compared with July 1914.

II.—ALL ITEMS.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN THE COST OF FOOD, TOGETHER WITH (SO FAR AS POSSIBLE) HOUSE-RENT, CLOTHING, FUEL AND LIGHT AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD REQUIREMENTS, AS COMPARED WITH JULY, 1914.†

Table showing percentage increase in the cost of all items for various countries like United Kingdom, Foreign Countries, etc., compared with July 1914.

\* Exceptions to this are: France (other towns), August, 1914; The Hague, January to July, 1914; Milan, January to June, 1914; Switzerland, June, 1914; Amsterdam, Spain, South Africa, average, 1914; Germany, average, 1913-1914. † Figure for June. ‡ Fuel and light are also included in these figures. § Figure for August. ¶ A = Food; B = House-Rent; O = Clothing; D = Fuel and Light; E = Other or Miscellaneous Items. ¶ Exceptions to this are: Amsterdam, 1911-1913; France, Poland, Australia and South Africa, average for 1914; Belgium, April, 1914; Greece, March, 1914; Milan, January to June, 1914; Germany, Egypt, Hungary, average, 1913-1914; Switzerland and Luxemburg, June, 1914; United States and Chile, 1913; Poland, January, 1914. \*\* Figure for 3rd Quarter.

EMPLOYMENT OVERSEAS.

[N.B.—The following paragraphs include an abstract of such official information as is available with regard to the state of employment abroad, in order to indicate, as far as possible, the fluctuations in employment in each country from period to period.

FRANCE.\*

Unemployment in June.—The total number of unemployed persons remaining on the "live register" of the Exchanges on 26th June was 7,916 (4,947 men and 2,969 women).

GERMANY.†

Employment in May.—No appreciable change in the labour market took place in May. There were indications of a slight decline such as appears to a varying extent each year when the "peak" period of employment during the spring has passed.

The number of members of statutory health insurance societies showed a small increase during May. On 1st June the societies making returns had a total of 13,078,045 members, as compared with 12,933,075 on 1st May—an increase of 1.1 per cent.

Table showing membership and percentage unemployed for various unions like Porcelain (S.D.), Glass (S.D.), Metal (S.D.), etc.

Figures relating to the number of persons in receipt of benefit in respect of total unemployment are available for 15th June, on which date the total was 1,749,111.

SWEDEN.§

Unemployment in May.—The percentage of members of trade unions making returns who were unemployed on 31st May, 1926, was 9.7, as compared with 12.2 on 30th April, and 7.9 on 31st May, 1925.

\* Revue du Travail, 30th June, 1926. Brussels. † Maandschrift van het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 30th June, 1926. The Hague. ‡ La Disoccupazione in Italia, 30th April, 1926. Rome. § Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics, March, 1926. Melbourne. ¶ Employment in Selected Industries, May, 1926. Washington. \*\* Information supplied by the Canadian Department of Labour, Ottawa.

BELGIUM.\*

Unemployment in May.—Provisional returns received by the Ministry of Industry and Labour from 149 approved societies, with a total membership of 602,946, show that 6,075 (1.0 per cent.) of these were totally unemployed at the end of the month.

HOLLAND.†

Unemployment in May.—The Journal of the Dutch Statistical Office contains preliminary figures compiled by the State Department of Unemployment Insurance and Employment Exchanges, which show that out of 259,474 members of subsidised unemployment funds making returns for the week ended 29th May, 1926, 13,799 (5.3 per cent.) were unemployed during the whole week, and 4,940 (1.9 per cent.) for less than six days.

ITALY.

Unemployment in April.—According to a report issued by the Italian Unemployment Insurance Department,† 93,216 workpeople were totally unemployed on 30th April, 1926, as compared with 109,471 at the end of March, and 126,521 at the end of April, 1925.

NORWAY.

Unemployment in April.—According to information supplied by the Norwegian Central Bureau of Statistics, out of 14,795 members of trade unions making returns, 25.0 per cent. were unemployed on the last day of April.

AUSTRALIA.§

Unemployment in First Quarter, 1926.—The proportion of members of trade unions unemployed in the first quarter of 1926 amounted to 8.2 per cent., as compared with 8.1 per cent. in the preceding quarter and 9.3 per cent. in the first quarter of 1925.

UNITED STATES.¶

Employment in May.—Figures relating to the volume of employment in May, based on returns from 9,836 establishments in 54 industries, are published by the Federal Bureau of Labour Statistics.

As regards comparison between the month under review and the corresponding month of 1925, there was an increase of 0.9 per cent. in the number employed, of 1.3 per cent. in the aggregate wages paid, and of 0.4 per cent. in the average weekly earnings.

CANADA.

Employment in June.¶—For 1st June, 1926, returns were received by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from 5,907 firms, with an aggregate of 828,483 upon their pay rolls.

\* Revue du Travail, 30th June, 1926. Brussels. † Maandschrift van het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 30th June, 1926. The Hague. ‡ La Disoccupazione in Italia, 30th April, 1926. Rome. § Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics, March, 1926. Melbourne. ¶ Employment in Selected Industries, May, 1926. Washington. \*\* Information supplied by the Canadian Department of Labour, Ottawa.







Sheffield.—**Battery of Pressure Filters, etc.:** The Candy Filter Co., London, W.—**Blankets:** Hepworths and Haley, Ltd., Dewsbury.—**Brake Blocks:** The Tees Side Bridge & Engg. Wks., Ltd., Middlesbrough.—**Cable:** E. Baylie & Co., Ltd., Stourbridge; W. T. Glover & Co., Ltd., Manchester; The London Electric Wire Co. & Smiths, Ltd., London, E.C.; Callender's Cable Construction Co., Ltd., London, S.W.—**Cables, etc.:** W. T. Henley's Tele. Wks. Co., Ltd., London, E.C.—**Candles:** Prices Patent Candle Co., London, E.C.—**Car:** Armstrong Siddeley Motors, London, W.; Daimler Co., Ltd., Coventry.—**Cement:** Cement Marketing Co., Ltd., London, S.W.; T. Beynon & Co., Ltd., London, E.C.—**Chassis & Lorries:** The Albion Motor Car Co., Ltd., Glasgow.—**Clothing:** J. Compton Sons & Webb, Ltd., London, E.; Hobson & Sons, Ltd., London, S.E.; D. Gurteen & Sons, Harverhill; S. D. Stretton & Sons, Ltd., Leicester.—**Cloth:** P. Womersley & Sons, Pudsey, nr. 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## METROPOLITAN POLICE.

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**Fish:** R. Pearson, Grimsby.

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The "MINISTRY OF LABOUR GAZETTE" is published on or about the 18th of each month, price 6d. net. The annual subscription (post free) is 7s.

The Publishers (to whom should be addressed all communications concerning subscriptions and sales) are H.M. Stationery Office, Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2, and branches (see Cover).

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, LTD., HIS MAJESTY'S PRINTERS, EAST HARDING STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.