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EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, COST OF
LIVING, AND TRADE DISPUTES IN
JANUARY.

EMPLOYMENT.

DURING the first three weeks of January there was a continuous improvement in employment. In the fourth week, however, the effects of the railway dispute caused temporary stoppages of work at many of the coal mines, and at a considerable number of factories in industries using large quantities of coal or dependent on the railways for transport facilities.

Among workpeople insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts in Great Britain and Northern Ireland the percentage unemployed at 28th January (the last full day of the railway stoppage) was 11·9, compared with 10·7 at 21st December, 1923, and with 11·5 at 26th November, 1923; at 22nd January, 1924, the corresponding percentage was 13·1. Among members of Trade Unions from which returns were received the percentage unemployed was 8·9 at the end of January, 1924, compared with 9·7 at the end of December, 1923. The total number of workpeople on the live registers of the Employment Exchanges at 21st January, 1924, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was approximately 1,253,000, of whom 925,000 were men and 248,000 were women, the remainder being boys and girls; at 31st December, 1923, the total was 1,289,000, of whom 954,000 were men and 264,000 were women.

At 28th January the total had risen to 1,322,000, but there was a marked improvement after the settlement of the railway dispute, and by 4th February it had fallen to 1,248,000.

WAGES.

In the industries for which statistics are available the changes in rates of wages reported as having taken effect in January resulted in an aggregate increase of £88,000 in the weekly full-time wages of nearly 1,000,000 workpeople, and in a decrease of £25,000 in the weekly wages of over 480,000 workpeople.

Among the principal groups of workpeople who obtained increases in wages were coal miners in Yorkshire and the East Midlands, the Forest of Dean, and Scotland, whose wages were raised by amounts ranging from about 1½ to 5½ per cent. on current rates. In the railway service there was an increase of 1s. per week in the wages of many of the principal grades, under the operation of the cost-of-living sliding scale. Men employed in the gas industry received an increase of ½d. per hour or 4d. per shift, and there was an increase of ¾d. per hour in the wages of men employed in the waterworks and electricity supply industries in many districts. Other groups of workpeople whose wages were increased included those employed in the textile bleaching, printing, dyeing, etc., trades and in the seed crushing and oil milling industries, electric cable makers, tube makers in Scotland, bobbin and shuttle makers, cement makers, coal tippers at the principal ports, coal porters in London, and warehouse workers at Manchester.

The principal reductions in rates of wages affected coal miners in Northumberland, Durham, and South Wales and Monmouthshire, the amount of decrease varying from under 1 to about 5½ per cent. on current rates; and blastfurnace workers in most districts in England and Wales, whose wages were reduced by amounts ranging from under 2 per cent. on current rates in Cumberland and North Staffordshire to over 7½ per cent. in Cleveland.

Under the Trade Boards Acts there were increases in the minimum rates fixed for certain classes of workpeople employed in the brush and broom trade, and for men and certain classes of female workers in the coffin furniture and cerement making trade; other classes of female workers in the latter trade had their rates reduced, and the minimum rates fixed for female workers in the button trade were also reduced.

COST OF LIVING.

At 1st February the average level of retail prices of the commodities taken into account in the statistics prepared by the Ministry of Labour (including food, rent, clothing, fuel, light and miscellaneous items) was approximately 79 per cent. above that of July, 1914, as compared with 77 per cent. a month ago and a year ago. For food alone the corresponding percentage for 1st February was 77, as compared with 75 a month ago and 73 a year ago. The rise in the percentage between 1st January and 1st February was mainly due to increases in the prices of potatoes, sugar, meat and coal, which were only partly counterbalanced by reductions in the prices of eggs and bacon.

The statistics are designed to indicate the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-war standard of living of working-class families. 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 these items in pre-war working-class family expenditure, no allowance being made for any changes in the standard of living.

For further particulars and details of the statistics for 1st February reference should be made to the article on page 47.

TRADE DISPUTES.

The number of trade disputes involving stoppages of work, reported to the Department as beginning in January, was 37. In addition, 11 disputes which began before January were still in progress at the beginning of the month. The total number of workpeople involved in all disputes in January (including workpeople thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, but not themselves parties to the disputes) was approximately 83,000, as compared with 10,000 in the previous month, and 19,000 in January, 1923. The estimated aggregate duration of all disputes during January was about 629,000 working days, as compared with 83,000 days in December, 1923, and 117,000 days in January, 1923. The principal dispute was that involving railway enginemen, which was in progress from 21st to 29th January.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

REPORT BY NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS.

In November, 1922, Sir Montague Barlow, then Minister of Labour, addressed a letter* to the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations and to the Trades Union Congress General Council inviting the co-operation of those bodies "in the consideration of the steps that might be taken with a view to the establishment of an improved system of Unemployment Insurance."

A Report by the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations has now been received by the Minister of Labour, of which the following is a summary:—

Unemployment Insurance in Relation to Relief of Distress Generally.

The compulsory insurance scheme of the 1911 Act had its origin in the Majority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law, issued in 1909, although it did not follow exactly on the lines of their recommendations.

The Royal Commission of 1905-9 found that there was a multiplicity of agencies dealing with the class which was sometimes called able-bodied, sometimes unemployed, regardless of the fact that this class was not really a class at all but a heterogeneous mass of men with no characteristic common to all of them, and that a similar confusion prevailed amongst the agencies themselves. The Commission recommended that there should be in every district an organisation for insurance against unemployment and a Labour Exchange for bringing together those requiring work and employers requiring workpeople.

Much of the unsatisfactoriness of the present arrangements for the relief of the unemployed arises primarily from the absence of any well-defined co-ordination between Unemployment Insurance and Poor Law Relief. In respect of both there have been, to meet admittedly unprecedented emergencies, hasty improvisations based on no common or settled principles.

The National Confederation nevertheless expresses the opinion that, whatever be the defects of the emergency measures, the experiment of compulsory Unemployment Insurance, as initiated in 1911, cannot be adjudged a failure in itself. On the contrary, experience since 1911 has proved that it is practicable, in normal times, to make provision, by way of insurance, for assisting the bona-fide workman over periods of temporary and unavoidable unemployment.

Unemployment Insurance by Industries.

The Confederation then turn to the suggestion that compulsory Unemployment Insurance should be developed along the line of each industry having its own separate scheme, which has been advocated as a measure of economy. It may well be, the National Confederation suggest, that economies can be effected in the administration of Unemployment Insurance, but, in their opinion, it is almost self-evident that a single administration of a uniform and general scheme ought to be much more economical than the cost, direct and indirect, of the administration of schemes for separate industries.

They further consider that compulsory insurance by industries is, in any event, quite impracticable on any comprehensive scale, owing to demarcation difficulties between industries, movements from industry to industry, absence of organisation in certain cases, and the position of seasonal and casual workers.

From the financial point of view it would not be practicable for even every well-organised industry to have a workable scheme. The industries which depend upon world markets suffer severe fluctuations than home trades. An industry having severe trade fluctuations could not offer the advantages given in an industry with low fluctuations. Disparity between contributions or benefits would create unrest.

The segregation of industries has, in addition, grave objection on the ground of general principle. Insurance is founded upon the principle of averaging. All industry is interdependent, though the incidence of depression and unemployment may fall very unequally. Unemployment Insurance if it is to be compulsory should be universal and uniform.

The 1920 Act made provision by which industries could contract out of the national scheme. This right to contract out was, and still is, suspended under the Unemployment Insurance (No. 2) Act of 1921. Contracting out is open, the National Confederation consider, to the same objection as insurance by industry. Employers and workers in high risk industries should not be saddled with the heavy burden it would involve if they were left unaided by the low risk industries. The whole industrial population should stand together upon a uniform basis.

In his Memorandum* the Minister of Labour embodied three alternative proposals, which, however, were not put forward as representing conclusions reached, but so that attention might be given to "two main objects"—

(a) linking the financial responsibility for paying benefit with the responsibility of finding employment, so as to give incentive for the reduction of unemployment.

(b) affording opportunity to industries of providing for their own unemployment in the hope that in the case of industries with average or less than average risks it will be possible to secure additional advantages for the worker.

Upon these "two main objects" the National Confederation comment as follows:—

* See the issue of this GAZETTE for December, 1922, page 472.

Object (a).—Unemployment Insurance is not a preventive against unemployment. It is an expedient to make provision against a normal risk of industrial life for the worker, just as lack of orders and remuneration is a normal risk for the employer. The real object to be achieved in the administration of the Insurance Fund is that benefit is only paid to the able and willing worker who is genuinely unemployed. The administering authority must have a much wider ambit than that of any individual trade. The machinery must be such also that the tendencies of expansion or restriction in the employing possibilities in industries are known and provided for.

Object (b).—In so far as employers and workmen in the lower risk industries may desire to make voluntary provision for advantages additional to those of the National Scheme, it should be by means of Supplementary Schemes, as contemplated in Section 20 of the 1920 Act.

The National Confederation conclude this part of their Report with the following observations:—

"It will at best be a very long time before the permanent post-war situation, from the point of view of employment and unemployment experience, can be ascertained in most of our industries. If Unemployment Insurance is in the interval to be restored to its appropriate place in the social services it can only be by developing it on the national basis of the 1920 Act, with such low risk industries as there are aiding the high risk industries."

"One of the ideas underlying the suggestion of insurance by individual industries is raised in another form, viz.: Whether Unemployment Insurance should be on the basis of like contributions and benefits for all workers, or of higher contributions and higher benefits for the higher paid workers. . . . It is the lack of opportunity on the part of unskilled and lower-paid workers to make provision for themselves that makes the call on the State and the employer necessary. The compulsory scheme . . . should not discriminate between the workers."

National Scheme of Compulsory Unemployment Insurance

Under the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 the foundation was laid for a national compulsory scheme covering the industrial population on the basis of a flat rate of contributions and a flat rate of benefits, and with the necessary insurance safeguards of a fixed ratio of benefits to contributions and a maximum number of benefits per year.

In the severity of the industrial depression the insurance safeguards have been overridden by a series of emergency measures. During the 137 weeks from March, 1921, to October, 1923, these emergency measures, which started when the State Donation Scheme came to an end, have permitted of benefits being drawn by the insured person for 110 weeks, irrespective of what contributions he may have paid, and even although he may not have paid any contributions. The total benefits paid out in these two and a half years have amounted to fully £128,000,000, and of that sum, the National Confederation estimate, the amount paid in respect of emergency measures was probably not less than £75,000,000. During the same period the sum spent by the Poor Law Authorities in respect of outdoor relief to insured workers and their dependents was probably not less than £25,000,000. The emergency payments from the Unemployment Insurance Fund have very materially relieved local rates. The effect of saddling the Insurance Fund with burdens which otherwise would have fallen on the Poor Law Authorities has been not to make those Authorities grateful for the help; rather the impression has been that they have a grievance because the Insurance Fund has not done more.

Under the 1923 Act the permanent principles laid down in the 1920 Act will be freed from all emergency provisions as from October, 1924; and the present high rates of contribution will be reduced when the Fund is solvent. It is of the utmost importance that the framework of Unemployment Insurance should be re-established on its proper and permanent basis. If further emergency measures on a modified basis should prove to be, for a limited time, necessary, they should be in the form of an *ad hoc* State provision.

The Confederation say that it is only when the provisions of the 1920 Act are at work again, free of emergency measures, that experience will be gained upon which full development can be determined in the light of permanent conditions.

The Report makes the following further observations:—

State's Contribution.—Instead of its present share of a little over one-fourth of the total contribution the State should pay the same rate as the employer and the worker when the Fund is solvent. This increase should allow improvement in the direction of increasing the number of weeks in any insurance year for which benefit will be paid.

Refunds to Insured (at the age of 60).—That the worker's premium should be returned to him if the risk against which he is insured does not take place is an anomalous proposition. The refund provision should be abolished, and in so far as rights have already been created these should be met by some other compensatory advantage.

The State as the sole administering authority.—One of the dangers of establishing Employment Exchanges on a voluntary basis was that skilled workers would not think it necessary to use the Exchanges, and there was therefore the risk of the system relaxing into purely *distress* machinery and not *economic* machinery. Under the 1911 Act and again in the 1920 Act, concurrent or partial administration by Trade Unions was provided for. As a result of the arrangement whereby Trade Unions administered the Insurance Fund, skilled men were kept aloof from the Employment Exchanges and the development and

usefulness of the Exchange system was prejudiced and brought into disrepute. Both on financial grounds and in the interests of the efficiency and usefulness of the Employment Exchanges as the administrative machinery of the Insurance Fund, they should be the sole administering authority.

Employment Exchanges.—It may be that industry is not yet prepared for the compulsory notification of vacancies to the Exchanges, or the compulsory registration of workers at the Exchanges, even although they are not in receipt of or qualified for insurance benefit. There is no reason, however, why firms should not be obliged to intimate to the Employment Exchange, within so many days, the engagement of any workers they take on. In the case of casual employment there would need to be a special arrangement.

Exchanges should, wherever it is practicable, have the more intimate knowledge of industry, its conditions and its personnel that specialised Exchanges can afford. The development of Employment Exchanges on specialised lines in large industrial centres would necessitate much better accommodation, but improved accommodation would permit of greater economy of staff.

Local Administration.—Local Committees on their present basis cannot be given executive or administrative powers. The National Confederation question, however, whether this subject can be usefully discussed apart from the general question of the co-ordination of the local public authorities and social agencies, as contemplated in the 1909 Poor Law Commission's Report.

Juveniles.—It was hoped that the system of Employment Exchanges would have the effect of enabling the Authorities to guide to some extent a new generation into the trades which are not overstocked and not declining."

The National Confederation point out that, in the matter of juveniles, there is still conflict of jurisdiction between the Education Authorities and the Employment Exchanges; and they express the opinion that jurisdiction over juveniles should not be divorced from the general scheme of unemployment machinery.

General.

On the general question of the amalgamation of Unemployment Insurance with one or more of the other social services, the National Confederation say:—

"Unemployment Insurance is not so related, either in principle or in substance, to Health Insurance, Workmen's Compensation, or Old Age Pensions, as to make amalgamation desirable.

It should be administered by a Department having under its survey the whole facts of unemployment. What is needed is not amalgamation of Unemployment Insurance with other social services, but such co-ordination between Unemployment Insurance and Poor Law Relief as will prevent overlapping and confusion, and will ensure that both thrift and charitable aid are preserved as part of the general scheme. The conclusions of the Royal Commission of 1909 should be reviewed again in the light of the experience of Unemployment Insurance since 1911, and more especially during the past three years."

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

THE Inter-departmental Committee* appointed early last year by the late Mr. Bonar Law "to examine the existing arrangements for the grant of assistance on account of sickness, unemployment and destitution, from public funds and from the contributory schemes of health and unemployment insurance, with a view to securing the fullest co-ordination of administrative and executive action" has issued its Report. The enquiry arose out of correspondence between Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Sidney Webb, M.P., in January, 1923, in which Mr. Webb had complained that many persons, especially ex-Service men, were failing to obtain provision for their needs under the various schemes of public assistance at present in operation "by reason of only of the gaps in and between the several schemes, and of the imperfection of inter-departmental co-ordination."

The Committee was strictly limited by its reference to a consideration of the practical administrative problem suggested by Mr. Webb's criticism. It has confined itself, therefore, to an investigation of possible defects in the working of the machinery of various schemes of social service as they stand to-day, remediable by administrative or executive action; it has not examined the merits of the various schemes or the adequacy of the provision made under them; nor, where assistance is to a greater or less extent discretionary, has it examined the principles by which such assistance is withheld or granted.

The Committee has considered the various schemes in the first place from the point of view of "gaps." It has reached the broad conclusion that these are for the most part not administrative "gaps" capable of being dealt with by administrative action, but are inherent in the statutory character of the services themselves. The Committee finds that there is, "generally speaking, little or no ground for the view that the administrative arrangements of the several services do not carry out the intentions of Parliament, or that persons are not receiving the assistance contemplated by Parliament." It has, however, discovered some cases where there is a danger that failure of co-ordination may produce a "gap," and it has made specific recommendations, which are set forth in full in the Report, for meeting this danger where it may occur.

The Committee has considered, in the second place, cases of so-called "over-lapping," i.e., cases where persons or households

* See the February, 1923, issue of this GAZETTE, page 42.

† Cmd. 2011. H.M. Stationery Office; price 4s. net.

may be obtaining assistance from two or more sources in excess of the measure contemplated by statute. Here again it has reached the conclusion that many of the allegations made as to the existence of widespread "overlapping" are due to lack of recognition of the extent to which duplication of provision by different agencies for the same form of need, or for different forms of need affecting various members of a single household, is permitted, and, indeed, in some cases contemplated, by the Statutes as they stand to-day. The Committee has, however, had some cases brought to its notice in which there appears to be a danger that inadequate administrative arrangements may lead to grants of assistance in excessive measure, and it has made a number of recommendations for safeguarding public funds in such cases.

Finally, the Committee has examined the possibility of improving administrative co-ordination by the adoption of arrangements for the local registration of assistance by the Authorities concerned. It has rejected as impracticable any scheme of compulsory and universal registration of assistance; but at the same time it is impressed with the value of some limited voluntary schemes of registration now in operation, and it makes certain recommendations with a view to encouraging the initiation of limited schemes of registration on a voluntary basis, and to improving local administrative co-ordination generally.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BILL.

A BILL to repeal proviso (2) to section 2 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1923, was introduced in the House of Commons, by the Minister of Labour on the 13th February.

The effect of the proviso referred to is to impose a "gap" of three weeks without benefit on insured persons who have drawn uncoventanted benefit (i.e., benefit beyond that due in respect of contributions) for twelve weeks. The Bill proposes to abolish this gap in benefit by repealing the proviso, as from 21st February, 1924.

In a Memorandum which accompanies the Bill it is stated that the financial effect of the Bill will be that an additional sum, estimated at about £600,000, will be paid in benefit out of the unemployment fund in the period up to October, 1924.

LACE, EMBROIDERY AND SILK INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE: FINAL REPORT.

THE Committee appointed to enquire into the causes of the unemployment in the machine-made lace and embroidery industries, and in the silk industry, have issued their Final Report,* dealing with the silk industry.

The Committee found themselves unable to arrive at unanimous conclusions. The chairman and one other member consider the causes of the unemployment at present existing in the silk industry to be the general trade depression and consequent reduced purchasing power, and, in certain sections of the trade, the bounty on export conferred by depreciated currencies of exporting countries; and they state that for various reasons which are set out in the Report, they are unable to recommend the proposal made to the Committee to impose import duties on (a) manufactured silks, (b) thrown silk, and (c) waste silk drafts or dressed silk. They state that it appears from their inquiries that, despite the general industrial depression, some firms and companies engaged in the silk industry have been able to maintain normal employment for their workpeople and at the same time run their businesses on a profitable basis, and that there appears to be no reason why the results accomplished by these firms and companies should not be attainable elsewhere.

The other two members of the Committee consider the main cause of the present unemployment in the industry to be foreign competition, and that the British silk industry in general has not been able to compete with the large industries of Continental countries, most of which are aided by depreciated currencies. They recommend that duties should be imposed for at least five years on imports into this country of manufactured silks (including artificial silks), spun silk yarn and noil yarn, thrown silk, waste silk drafts or dressed silk, and made-up silk or artificial silk goods.

THE RAILWAY ENGINEMEN'S STRIKE.

THE progress of events, up to 14th January, following upon the refusal of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen to accept the findings of the National Wages Board, was narrated in the January issue of this GAZETTE.

On 17th January the Railway Companies issued a statement of their position. After referring to the composition of the National Wages Board, which includes representatives of the Railway Companies and of the Railway Trade Unions, together with outside representatives of employers, of the Trades Union Congress, and of the Co-operative Union, and pointing out that the decisions were signed by all members of the Board, the statement proceeded as follows:—"Decisions of the Board are not obligatory, but it is evident that if all parties signatory thereto are not prepared to carry them out, the whole machinery of negotiation established in the Act of 1921 at the joint

* H.M. Stationery Office; price 1s. 6d. net. The Interim Report (dealing with the machine-made lace and embroidery industries) was summarised in the December, 1923, issue of this GAZETTE, page 434.

DETAILED REPORTS ON EMPLOYMENT IN SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES.

NOTE.—The numbers of workpeople given in the following Tables represent the numbers covered by the Returns received and (except as regards coal mining) not the total numbers employed in the various industries. The comparisons of numbers employed and wages paid at different dates relate to the same firms at each date, and cover all the wage-earners, irrespective of age, sex, or occupation, employed by these firms. In comparing the earnings in different industries, it should be remembered that any averages calculated from these figures will be affected not only by the variations in the state of employment and in rates of wages, but also by differences in the proportions of males and females, of adults and juveniles, and of skilled and unskilled workers in the respective industries. The particulars given relate to Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

COAL MINING.

EMPLOYMENT during January continued good on the whole, but towards the end of the month was adversely affected, especially in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Wales, and Scotland, by transport difficulties due to the railway dispute. The average number of days worked per week for the fortnight ended 26th January accordingly showed a marked decline, being only 5.17 days per week, as compared with 5.68 in the previous month and with 5.56 in January, 1923.

The total number of wage earners on the colliery books at 26th January showed an increase of 0.1 per cent., as compared with the previous month, and of 4.5 per cent. compared with a year ago.

The proportion of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 4.6 per cent. at 26th January, 1924 (the last full day of the railway stoppage), compared with 2.4 per cent. at 21st December, 1923.

The following Table shows, for the principal coal-mining districts, the total number of wage earners on the colliery books and the average number of days worked per week* during the fortnight ended 26th January, 1924, as shown by the figures furnished to the Mines Department. Small numbers of workpeople employed at coal mines in raising or handling minerals other than coal are included in these totals:—

Table with columns for Districts, Total Number of Wage Earners on Colliery Books at 26th Jan. 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with a, Average Number of Days worked per Week by the Mines, and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with a. Rows include England and Wales, Scotland, and Great Britain.

For the whole of Great Britain during the fortnight ended 26th January, 1924, the average weekly number of coal-winding days lost was 0.59 of a day, of which 0.53 of a day was lost through transport difficulties and want of trade; the corresponding figures for the fortnight ended 22nd December, 1923, were 0.09 of a day and 0.05 of a day respectively; for the fortnight ended 27th January, 1923, they were 0.21 of a day and 0.17 of a day respectively. The average non-winding time in each of the three periods was about a quarter of a day per week.

The output of coal in Great Britain for the four weeks ended 26th January, which was affected by the railway dispute and New Year holidays, was returned to the Mines Department at 20,788,100 tons, a decrease of 2,501,900 tons compared with the figures for the four weeks ended 22nd December, 1923, and a decrease of 431,100 tons compared with the relative figures for the four weeks ended 27th January, 1923.

The exports of coal, including coal shipped for the use of steamers engaged in the foreign trade, and the coal equivalent of coke and manufactured fuel, amounted in January, 1924, to 7,719,577 tons, compared with 8,094,311 tons in December, 1923.

* The figures in this and the following article show the number of days (allowance being made in all the calculations for short days) on which coal, iron &c., were got from the mines included in the returns. It is not necessarily implied that all the persons worked every day the mines were open. Mines not working are omitted in computing the average number of days worked.

† Including Cannock Chase.

IRON AND SHALE MINING.

Iron Mining.

EMPLOYMENT at iron mines was adversely affected towards the end of January by the railway stoppage, some mines being compelled temporarily to close down. In Cleveland it was bad, though better than in the previous month; in other districts it was moderate.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed in iron ore and ironstone mining and quarrying, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 32.7 on 26th January, 1924 (the last day of the railway dispute), as compared with 19.4 on 21st December, 1923.

Table with columns for Districts, Number of Workpeople employed at Mines included in the Returns, Average No. of Days worked per week by the Mines, and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with a. Rows include Cleveland, Cumberland and Lancashire, Other Districts, and ALL DISTRICTS.

Shale Mining.

Employment remained fair during January. At mines employing 4,171 workpeople during the fortnight ended 26th January there was a decrease of 0.9 per cent. in the numbers employed compared with the previous month and a decrease of 4.8 per cent. compared with January, 1923. The average number of days* worked per week by the mines was 5.95 in January, 1924, 5.97 in December, 1923, and 5.92 in January, 1923.

PIG IRON INDUSTRY.

EMPLOYMENT during January continued moderate and showed a slight improvement compared with December, but was adversely affected, towards the end of the month, by the railway stoppage.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 13.6 at 26th January, 1924 (the last full day of the railway strike), compared with 11.4 at 21st December, 1923.

Returns received by the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers from eighty-three firms employing 21,451 workpeople at the end of January showed an increase of 1.5 per cent. compared with the number employed at the end of December, but a decrease of 0.4 per cent. compared with January, 1923.

The total number of furnaces in blast at the end of January, as shown by the returns collected by the Federation, was 190, a decrease of fourteen compared with December, but an increase of seven compared with January, 1923.

The following Table shows the total number of furnaces in blast at the end of January, 1924, December, 1923, and January, 1923, according to returns collected by the Federation:—

Table with columns for District, Total Number of Furnaces, Number of Furnaces in Blast at end of (Jan. 1924, Dec. 1923, Jan. 1923), and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) in Jan., on a. Rows include England and Wales, Scotland, and Total.

* See * footnote in previous column.

The production of pig iron in January amounted to 636,600 tons, as compared with 626,900 tons in December, and 567,900 tons in January, 1923.

IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

EMPLOYMENT at iron and steel works during January was moderate on the whole. It showed a tendency to improve until the latter part of the month, when it was adversely affected by the railway dispute. After the termination of the dispute employment improved rapidly.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 23.2 per cent. on 26th January, the last full day of the railway stoppage, as compared with 17.1 per cent. on 21st December, 1923.

According to returns from firms employing 73,181 workpeople, the volume of employment during the week ended 26th January (as indicated by the number of workpeople employed at each works, combined with the number of shifts during which work was carried on in each case) decreased 9.5 per cent. as compared with a month ago and 1.7 per cent. as compared with a year ago. The average number of shifts during which the works were open in the week ended 26th January was 5.4, as compared with 5.4 in both December, 1923, and January, 1923.

The following Table summarises the returns received from employers who furnished figures for the three periods under review. The marked decline in employment shown in the Table is due to the shortage of coal and other raw materials, and to the difficulty experienced in disposing of or storing the finished iron and steel products, resulting from the railway stoppage.

Table with columns for DEPARTMENTS, No. of Workpeople employed by firms making returns, Aggregate number of Shifts, and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with a. Rows include Open Hearth Melting Furnaces, Puddling Forges, Rolling Mills, Forging and Pressing, Founding, Other Departments, etc., and DEPARTMENTS. Rows include London, South Eastern, Midlands, North Eastern, North Western, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, Males, Females, and TOTAL.

The production of steel ingots and castings, as returned to the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers, amounted in January to 690,100 tons, compared with 653,300 tons in December, 1923, and with 624,300 tons in January, 1923.

TINPLATE AND STEEL SHEET TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT in these trades continued good during January, but showed some decline as compared with the previous month. At a few works employment towards the end of the month was affected by the railway stoppage.

At the end of the month 524 tinplate and sheet steel mills were reported to be in operation at the works for which information is available, as compared with 537 in December, 1923, and 500 in January, 1923.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the number of unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 8.1 on 26th January, 1924 (the last full day of the railway stoppage), compared with 3.6 on 21st December, 1923.

* The figures relate to the number of shifts during which the works were in operation, allowance being made for the numbers of men employed. No account is taken of the time lost by individuals owing to absenteeism, &c., and it is not implied that the number of shifts shown were actually worked by all the men employed.

The following Table shows the number of mills in operation at the works covered by the returns received at the end of January, 1924, together with the increases and decreases, as compared with December, 1923, and January, 1923:—

Table with columns for Works, Number of Works Open, and Number of Mills in Operation. Rows include Tinplate, Steel Sheet, and TOTAL.

The exports of tinned and galvanized plates and sheets in January, 1924, amounted to 106,513 tons, or 14,053 tons more than in December, 1923, and 12,100 tons more than in January, 1923.

ENGINEERING.

EMPLOYMENT in this industry remained bad during January, the tendency to improvement being checked, towards the end of the month, by the effects of the railway strike. Although not so severely affected as some industries, it suffered to a certain extent from shortages of coal and materials, and workpeople were stood off at various centres. In marine engineering employment continued to improve; in the motor section it was fair, on the whole, and better than in the previous month; the railway and electrical sections maintained their satisfactory position; but in textile engineering employment remained bad, much short time continuing to be worked in this section.

The following Table shows the numbers and percentages of insured workpeople unemployed at 26th January, 1924 (the last full day of the railway stoppage), and the increase or decrease as compared with 21st December, 1923:—

Table with columns for Divisions, Number of Insured Workpeople Unemployed at 26th January, 1924, and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with 21st Dec., 1923. Rows include London, South Eastern, Midlands, North Eastern, North Western, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, Males, Females, and TOTAL.

Table with columns for Divisions, Percentage Unemployed at 26th January, 1924, and Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) in percentage as compared with 21st Dec., 1923. Rows include London, South Eastern, South Western, Midlands, North Eastern, North Western, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, Males, Females, and TOTAL.

On the North-East Coast employment was still very bad, but the gradual revival was maintained, although handicapped by the effects of the railway strike. There was a noticeable improvement in marine engineering, and further improvement in this section was anticipated as shipbuilding work advances. In the locomotive section employment was fairly good. In the electrical section on the Tyne it was not so good as in the previous month. In Yorkshire employment continued bad, but

showed a further improvement, though affected by the railway dispute; it continued fair on railway work and good with printing machinery. In Lincolnshire it was bad and showed little change. In Lancashire and Cheshire in textile machinery works conditions were very bad, with much short time, and were rather worse than in the previous month. The railway, electrical and motor sections continued fairly well employed. General engineering was still depressed, though some improvement was shown, especially in the Manchester district.

At Birmingham general engineering was slack, and the motor section was not very active; foundry workers and pattern-makers were fairly well employed, however, and some improvement, on the whole, was reported. At Wolverhampton motor work was fairly good, and general engineering showed an improvement. At Coventry the motor industry was reported as almost normal, makers of heavy cars, light cars and motor-cycles sharing in the general improvement. In the Nottingham, Derby and Leicester districts employment remained quiet. The motor and cycle sections at Nottingham were a little busier, but employment for lace machinery builders was very bad. At Derby the locomotive section was fairly well employed, but motor work was irregular. Hosiery machine making at Leicester was reported as still good.

In the Eastern Counties employment was still fair at Norwich and Ipswich, although there were indications of a decline in some departments; while at Colchester and Luton it remained bad. In the London district it continued moderate, on the whole; the improvement in the motor section was maintained, mostly on the heavier types of vehicles; in the electrical section some decline was reported; in general engineering there was a slight improvement, except in East London, where employment declined. In the Southern Counties conditions continued to improve; railway work remained good; motor work showed an improvement, especially at Bristol and Oxford. In South Wales employment continued slack, and was affected by the railway dispute. At Swansea, however, it was fair.

Employment in Glasgow and the West of Scotland was still bad, but showed a slight improvement. In the East of Scotland, also, a little improvement was experienced. At Belfast conditions were still bad.

SHIPBUILDING.

EMPLOYMENT in the shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries remained very bad during January. It showed a further improvement compared with the previous month, but conditions at the shipyards involved in the recent dispute had not yet become normal.

On the North-East Coast employment was still very bad, but showed a slow general improvement as the work advanced in its stages. On the East Coast it continued bad. On the Thames it was bad, and showed a decline towards the end of the month. There was a considerable improvement at Southampton, where the annual refitting and overhauling of a number of large liners was in progress, men being brought from Falmouth and Cowes to assist in this work. Upon repair work at Swansea employment was good, but at Cardiff it steadily declined, and was bad. On the Mersey employment was slack on the whole, but rather better than during December. At Barrow it was still bad, though continuing to improve.

On the Clyde employment on new work remained very bad, but was better than during the previous month, with prospects of further improvement; an improvement on repair work was also reported. At Dundee and Aberdeen there was a slow improvement. At Leith employment upon repair work showed considerable fluctuation. At Belfast employment continued bad.

The following Table shows the numbers and percentages of insured workpeople unemployed at 28th January, 1924, and the increase or decrease as compared with 21st December, 1923:—

Table with 5 columns: Divisions, Total number of insured workpeople unemployed at 28th Jan., 1924, Increase (+) or Decrease (-) as compared with 21st Dec., 1923, Percentage Unemployed at 28th Jan., 1924, Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in percentage as compared with 21st Dec., 1923.

WOOLLEN AND WORSTED TRADES.

THERE was a further slight improvement in employment in some sections of these trades during January.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 9.2 on 28th January, 1924, as compared with 9.9 on the 21st December, 1923.

During January employment in the wool combing section of the trade remained bad; the great majority of the mills were reported to be working short time, but in two or three cases night shifts which had been suspended were resumed. In the wool sorting section there was no change. There was a slight improvement in the spinning section in all branches, but employment in the Bradford and Huddersfield area with spinners of worsted yarns was only moderate. A slight improvement was reported in the manufacturing sections also, more especially in the dress goods trade of Bradford, Keighley and Silsden. No improvement, however, was reported in the fine cloth men's wear trade in the Bradford, Keighley, Leeds, Halifax and Huddersfield areas.

The woollen trade was better employed than a month earlier in the Huddersfield and Colne Valley district; a fair amount of overtime was worked, and there was some night work. The tweed trade of the Colne Valley and the Heavy Woollen District showed a continuous improvement, and there was also some improvement in the Morley district, in the Calder Vale and in the Leeds low woollen trade. In the blanket trade employment was reported as moderate; in the flannel trade of Rochdale, Saddleworth and Yeadon it was fair, although somewhat irregular.

In Scotland there was some improvement as compared with the previous month. At Galashiels employment was still slack, but better than in December; at the end of January certain tweed mills which had been running half-time or less were reported to be working five days a week, but a considerable amount of short time was still being worked by some firms.

The following Table summarises the information received from those employers who furnished returns as to the numbers of workpeople employed and the total amount of wages paid in the three periods under review:—

WOOLLEN INDUSTRY.

Table with 6 columns: Departments, Number of Workpeople (Week ended 26th Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month ago, Year ago), Total Wages paid to all Workpeople (£, Per cent., Per cent.).

WORSTED INDUSTRY.

Table with 6 columns: Departments, Number of Workpeople (Week ended 26th Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month ago, Year ago), Total Wages paid to all Workpeople (£, Per cent., Per cent.).

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

Table with 6 columns: Districts, Number of Workpeople (Week ended 26th Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month ago, Year ago), Total Wages paid to all Workpeople (£, Per cent., Per cent.).

Returns from firms in the woollen section employing 13,980 workpeople in the week ended 26th January showed that about 35 per cent. of these workpeople were on short time to the extent, on the average, of 7½ hours in that week. In the worsted section returns from firms employing 24,943 workpeople in the same week showed that about 30 per cent. of these workpeople were on short time to the extent of 10½ hours on the average.

The imports (less re-exports) of raw wool (sheep or lambs) were 16,064,900 lbs. in January, 1924, compared with 27,081,600 lbs. in December, 1923, and 54,705,800 lbs. in January, 1923.

The exports of woollen and worsted yarns were 4,276,000 lbs., compared with 3,246,600 lbs. in December, 1923, and 3,878,500 lbs. in January, 1923.

The exports of woollen and worsted tissues were 22,389,500 square yards, compared with 19,134,300 square yards in December, 1923, and 22,063,500 square yards in January, 1923.

The exports of blankets were 193,941 pairs, 180,857 pairs and 160,307 pairs in January, 1924, December, 1923, and January, 1923, respectively.

COTTON TRADE.

DURING January employment in the cotton trade was bad on the whole and worse than in December. There was little change in the Egyptian spinning section, in which the operatives continued to be well employed, but in the American spinning section a decline was reported. In the weaving section generally employment was slack, although it was reported to be fairly good in districts manufacturing fancy cloths.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 15.7 on the 28th January, 1924, as compared with 12.0 on the 21st December, 1923. Some part of this increase, however, is attributable to the effects of the railway stoppage.

In the Oldham, Ashton and Stockport districts employment in the spinning section showed little change as compared with a month ago; some stoppages occurred owing to lack of coal caused by the railway strike. In the manufacturing section employment was quiet, many weaving sheds being closed for varying periods; calico weavers were very slack, but employment was fairly good with weavers of towels, fustians and velvets.

At Bolton, Leigh and Chorley employment continued good in the spinning section; with weavers in the Bolton district it was reported as fair. In the Bury district employment was bad, and worse than a month earlier; at Rochdale it was reported as fair.

In the principal weaving centres, including Blackburn, Burnley, Preston and Darwen, employment was slack. In Blackburn over 17,000 looms (nearly one-fifth of the total) were stated to have been idle during the month. At Preston, although there was much unemployment and short time working, employment was reported as better than in December, 1923. In Darwen also employment was reported as slightly better than a month ago, but many looms were idle although the mills were running.

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

Table with 6 columns: DEPARTMENTS, Number of Workpeople (Week ended 26th Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month ago, Year ago), Total Wages paid to all Workpeople (£, Per cent., Per cent.).

Table with 6 columns: DISTRICTS, Number of Workpeople (Week ended 26th Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month ago, Year ago), Total Wages paid to all Workpeople (£, Per cent., Per cent.).

Returns from firms employing nearly 78,000 workpeople showed that over one-quarter of the workpeople reported on were on short time to the extent of about seventeen hours, on the average, in the week ended 26th January.

The imports (less re-exports) of raw cotton (including cotton linters) were 212,003,000 lbs. in January, 1924, compared with 234,889,000 lbs. in the previous month and with 119,909,300 lbs. in January, 1923.

The exports of cotton yarn were 10,991,500 lbs. in January, 1924, compared with 11,136,500 lbs. in December, 1923, and 12,814,700 lbs. in January, 1923.

The exports of cotton piece goods were 353,965,900 square yards, as compared with 323,100,000 square yards in the previous month, and with 399,988,200 square yards in January, 1923.

BOOT AND SHOE INDUSTRY.

EMPLOYMENT during January was again only moderate on the whole, but the improvement which was noticeable during the larger part of the previous month was fairly well maintained. In many districts a considerable amount of short time was still worked; but conditions were generally better than in January of last year.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 9.5 on 28th January, 1924, as compared with 9.8 on 21st December, 1923.

In London employment was still bad, though slightly better than in the previous month. A further improvement occurred at Leicester, and employment was fair; there was less short time working than in the previous month, and overtime was reported in a few cases. At Northampton, however, a considerable amount of short time was still worked, and employment remained only moderate. At Kettering there was no marked change as compared with December, and employment remained generally moderate, but at Desborough less time was lost and employment improved. In the Wellingborough, Higham and Rushden districts employment remained fair on the whole. Although short time was worked in a number of factories a few workpeople were on overtime during the month. At Hinckley a slight decline in employment was reported. There was practically no change at Leeds, but at Stafford employment again showed a slight upward movement.

At Norwich factories were working fuller time during January, and employment was better on the whole than in December; but in the Bristol and Kingswood district employment was not so good, while at Street it was bad and worse than in the previous month, practically all of the operatives being again on short time.

Employment was again bad at Arbroath, and at Maybole it declined to slack; short time working was fairly general in these districts. In other Scottish centres employment was fairly good, and in the Glasgow and Kilmarnock districts improvements were reported.

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

Table showing Total Wages paid to all Workpeople by Districts, including England and Wales, Scotland, and United Kingdom, with columns for Week ended, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a, and Total Wages.

Returns from firms employing 38,291 workpeople in the week ended 26th January showed that 30.3 per cent. of these work people worked short time in that week to the extent of about 14 hours each on an average.

The exports of boots and shoes in January, 1924, amounted to 95,155 dozen pairs, or 4,608 dozen pairs less than in December, 1923, but 21,944 dozen pairs more than in January, 1923.

PAPER MANUFACTURE, PRINTING, AND BOOKBINDING.

EMPLOYMENT in the paper trade was moderate, on the whole, and showed a slight decline on the previous month. In many districts the mills continued to work irregularly, and in some districts a shortage of coal, caused by the partial stoppage of the railways, adversely affected employment towards the end of the month.

With letterpress printers employment was generally reported as slack in London and fair or moderate in the provinces, showing a decline on a month ago in most districts. Employment was again reported as very good with electrotypers and stereotypers in London; it was also good with compositors, etc., at Leicester and Dundee, but slack at Newcastle and Aberdeen.

The percentage unemployed among workpeople covered by the Unemployment Insurance Acts in the printing and book-binding trades was 6.4 at 28th January, 1924, compared with 5.1 per cent. at 21st December, 1923.

The following Table summarises the returns received from Trade Unions:—

Table showing No. of Members of Unions at end of Jan., 1924, Percentage Unemployed at end of Jan., Dec., Jan. 1923, and Increase (+) or Decrease (-) on a.

BUILDING TRADE.

EMPLOYMENT in the building trade during January continued fairly good, on the whole, with skilled operatives (other than painters) and slack or bad with unskilled workers; in the painting and decorating section of the trade there was a further seasonal decline, and employment was very bad.

including Grimsby, Coventry and Great Yarmouth, and at a number of centres irregular time was worked owing to bad weather conditions.

As regards individual occupations employment remained very good generally with bricklayers, and good in most districts with masons and plasterers; it was fairly good, on the whole, with carpenters and joiners and fair with slaters, with whom a further slight seasonal decline was noticeable.

The following Table shows the numbers and approximate percentages* of workpeople insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts who were unemployed at 28th January, 1924, and the increase or decrease in the percentage as compared with 21st December, 1923:—

Table showing Occupations, Total Number of Insured Workpeople Unemployed at 28th January, 1924, Approximate Percentage Unemployed, and Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in percentage as compared with 21st December, 1923.

BUILDING PLANS APPROVED.

RETURNS received from Local Authorities in 137 of the principal urban areas in Great Britain (except the London County Council area), with a total population of 15,004,000, show that in January, 1924, plans were passed for buildings of an estimated cost of £4,204,000, as compared with £4,239,500 in December, 1923, and £2,850,600 in January, 1923.

BRICK TRADE.

EMPLOYMENT during January remained fair, and showed little change on the whole in comparison with December, but in some districts work slackened owing to bad weather. Employment in the Peterborough, Birmingham and Wolverhampton districts was fairly good.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed in the brick, pipe, tile, etc., trades, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges on 28th January, 1924, was 10.0, compared with 8.4 on 21st December, 1923.

The following Table summarises the information received to the number of workpeople employed, and amount of wages paid by those employers who furnished returns for the three periods under review:—

* Figures are not available as to the exact numbers of insured workpeople in each of the occupations shown in the first column of the Table, in the building industry. For the purpose of computing the percentages given in the third column, the total numbers insured, in each occupation, have been estimated, applying ratios obtained from the exchange of unemployment books which took place in 1922 to the total number of insured workers engaged in the building industry as shown by the 1923 exchange of books.

Table showing Number of Workpeople, Total Wages Paid to all Workpeople, by Districts, including Northern Counties, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, Midlands and Eastern Counties, South and South-West Counties and Wales, and Other Districts.

Returns from firms employing 6,172 workpeople showed that about 7½ per cent. of these workpeople worked short time to the extent of 7 hours each on an average, during the week ended 26th January.

POTTERY TRADES.

DURING January, employment in the pottery trades showed little change as compared with the previous month, and remained slack on the whole. In the china section there was a slight improvement; in the tile and sanitary earthenware sections employment declined slightly, but was still good.

In Staffordshire, employment was again slack generally; at Bristol it was still fair, but it was reported as good at Derby, and as fairly good at Worcester.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges at 28th January, 1924, was 15.1, as compared with 14.6 at 21st December, 1923.

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

Table showing BRANCHES (China Manufacture, Earthenware Manufacture, Other Branches), DISTRICTS (Potteries, Other Districts), and TOTAL, with columns for Number of Workpeople and Total Wages paid to all Workpeople.

Returns from employers relating to short-time working showed that of 7,657 workpeople employed, 2,091, or 27.3 per cent., were working on an average 15 hours less than full time in the week ended 26th January, 1924.

SEAMEN.

EMPLOYMENT with seamen during January was poor on the whole, and at the majority of the ports considerable numbers of men failed to obtain engagements. Among insured workpeople in the shipping service the percentage unemployed at 28th January, 1924, was 21.8, compared with 21.1 at 21st December, 1923.

On the Thames the demand for men was fairly good on the whole. It was quiet on the Tyne and very quiet on the Tees and the Wear. Employment at Hull was fairly good in the first half of January, and declined afterwards.

The demand on the Clyde and at Leith was quiet. At Belfast it was poor, and became negligible at the end of the month.

The following Table shows the number of seamen shipped in British registered foreign-going vessels at the undermentioned ports of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during January:—

Table showing Number of Seamen* shipped in, including Principal Ports (ENGLAND & WALES, SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND) with columns for Principal Ports, Jan., 1924, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a, and Month ago, Year ago.

DOCK AND RIVERSIDE LABOUR.

EMPLOYMENT among dock labourers during January continued moderate on the whole. Work on coal shipments was seriously affected by the railway dispute, but otherwise employment showed little general change from the level of the previous month.

LONDON.—The following Table shows the average daily number of dock labourers employed at the docks and at the principal wharves in each week of the month:—

Table showing Average Daily Number of Labourers employed in Docks and at Principal Wharves in London, with columns for Period, In Docks, At Wharves, and Total.

Tilbury.—The mean daily number of dock labourers employed in January was 971, as compared with 1,022 in the previous month, and with 978 in January, 1923.

East Coast.—Employment with coal trimmers on the Tyne and Wear was good, but showed a falling off at the end of the month. With other classes of workers it was fair on the whole.

Western and Southern Ports.—At Liverpool employment was fair. The average weekly number of dock labourers registered at the Clearing Houses under the Liverpool Docks Scheme as employed in the five weeks ended 28th January was 15,211, compared with 15,773 in the four weeks ended 24th December, and with 14,958 in the corresponding period of 1923.

Employment at the South Wales ports showed a decline. At Plymouth and other South Western ports it continued quiet, and at Southampton there was little change.

Scottish and Irish Ports.—Employment at Glasgow was moderate, and worse than in December. At Leith and Aberdeen it was fair. At Dundee it was reported as exceptionally good owing to seasonal activity in the jute trade.

* It will be understood that the numbers given are the numbers of separate engagements, and not of separate individuals. † In the statistics given in previous issues of this GAZETTE, the figures for Manchester have been included with those for Liverpool and district. ‡ Including Avonmouth and Portishead. § Including Barry and Penarth.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING JANUARY, 1924—(continued).

Table with columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes sections for Mining and Quarrying, Brick, Pottery, Glass, Chemical, etc., Trades, Iron and Steel Smelting and Manufacture, and Engineering and Shipbuilding.

* The change took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with selling prices.
† The increase took effect under an arrangement made by the National Joint Industrial Council for the Cement Manufacturing Industry.
‡ Under the sliding scale arrangement previously in operation a reduction of 4½ per cent. on standard rates took effect on 6th January. From this date, however, it was agreed that the selling price corresponding to the standard rates should be altered from 61s. 6d. to 67s. 6d. per ton, the effect of this alteration being a further reduction in wages of 6 per cent. on standard rates.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING JANUARY, 1924—(continued).

Table with columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes sections for Other Metal Trades, Machine Knife and Allied Trades, and Textile Trades.

* The increases for time rates described took effect under an agreement made by the Joint Industrial Council for the Cable Making Industry.
† The change took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour index number of retail prices.
‡ Increases were also made in the wages of the pieceworkers.
§ Viz., Yorkshire, South Wales and Monmouthshire, West Midlands, West of England, East Midlands, East Coast, Home Counties, South Coast District, Devon and Cornwall, and Scotland.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING JANUARY, 1924—(continued).

Industry.	Locality.	Date from which change took effect.	Classes of Workpeople.	Particulars of change. (Decreases in italics.)
Textile Bleaching, Printing, Dyeing, etc. (contd.)	West Riding of Yorkshire Bolton and Bury Districts	Pay preceding 1st pay day in Feb.	TEXTILE TRADES—(continued). Mechanics employed in dye-works Mechanics employed in the textile dyeing, bleaching, etc., industry Mechanics employed in calico print works Engravers, etc., employed in calico print works— Engravers Turners polishers and varnishers Engravers employed in engraving works	Increase* to a rate of 64s. 8d. per week at Bradford, Leeds and Shipley, and to 63s. 8d. at other towns. * Cost of living wage increased* from 23s. 10d. to 24s. 5d. per week. Total rate after change, 62s. 5d. * Cost of living wage increased* from 23s. 10d. to 24s. 5d. per week. Total rate after change, 62s. 5d. * Cost of living wage increased* from 32s. 6d. to 33s. 1d. per week. * Cost of living wage increased* from 23s. 10d. to 24s. 5d. per week. * Cost of living wage increased* from 29s. 6d. to 30s. 1d. per week for men, from 17s. 4d. to 17s. 8d. per week for women, from 18s. 11d. to 19s. 4d. per week for youths 18 to 21 years, and from 13s. 5d. to 13s. 8d. per week for youths 16 to 18 years.
	Certain towns in Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Scotland Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Scotland and Belfast		1st pay after 1 Jan.	CLOTHING TRADES. Certain classes of female workers— Learners Other than learners, with 4 years' employment in the trade Junior hands Solemakers and seatmen Men on weekly wages Branch managers (employed by Co-operative Societies)
Retail Bespoke Dressmaking	London†	1st pay day in Jan.		FOOD, DRINK, AND TOBACCO TRADES. Workpeople employed in the bread baking and confectionery trades
Clogging	Lancashire (except Manchester)	1st pay day in Jan.	All classes except those whose wages are regulated by movements in the engineering and other trades Workpeople (other than apprentices) employed in the cigar section of the tobacco trade	Increase* of 1s. per week for men 21 and over, and of 6d. per week for youths and women. General minimum time rates, previously fixed under the Trade Boards Acts, for workers other than those who have not completed the first twelve months' employment as learners to hand or mould cigar making extended to cover these learners. (See also p. 72.)
Baking and Confectionery	Pontypridd and Rhondda Valley	29 Dec.	WOODWORKING AND FURNITURE TRADES. Labourers employed in sawmills Woodcutting machinists and sawyers employed in sawmills and box and packing case shops Workpeople employed in sawmills (pit prop):— Male workers 19 years of age and over Male workers under 19 years and female workers Cabinet makers, carvers, machinists, french polishers, and upholsterers Cabinet makers, chairmakers, carvers, machinists, upholsterers, and french polishers Upholstresses Cabinet makers, french polishers, and upholsterers Timeworkers:— Cabinet makers, chairmakers, woodcutting machinists, upholsterers, and french polishers Female french polishers and upholstresses Pieceworkers Carpet and blind fitters	Increase* of 1d. per hour (1s. to 1s. 1d.). Increase* of 1/2d. per hour (1s. 5 1/2d. to 1s. 6d.). Increase of 3s. per week. Rates after change: single bench sawyers, 65s. 6d.; double bench sawyers and saw sharpeners, 60s. 6d.; drawers-off, 56s.; mill loaders, mill and motor cross cutters and tallymen, 55s.; labourers, 54s. Increase of 1s. 6d. per week. Increase* of 1/2d. per hour. Rates after change: french polishers and upholsterers, 1s. 7d.; others, 1s. 7d., plus 1/2d. per hour "tool" money. Increase* of 1/2d. per hour. Rate after change: 1s. 7 1/2d.; carvers and spindle hands who are all-round machinists, 1s. 8 1/2d. Increase* of 1/2d. per hour (10d. to 10 1/2d.). Increase* of 1/2d. per hour (1s. 6d. to 1s. 6 1/2d.). Increase* of 1/2d. per hour for adult workers, and of proportionate amounts for boys and youths. Standard rate after change for skilled adults, 1s. 6 1/2d. Increase* of 1/2d. per hour for adult workers, and of proportionate amounts for girls. Standard rate after change for adults, 9d. Percentage addition to pre-war piecework prices increased* from 6 1/2 to 7. Increase* of 1/2d. per hour (1s. 5d. to 1s. 5 1/2d.).
Seed Crushing and Oil Milling Industry	Great Britain§	1st full pay week in Jan.		
Tobacco	Great Britain ...	14 Jan.		
Mill Sawing, etc.	Hartlepool ...	1 Jan.		
	Bristol ...	1st pay day in Dec.		
Furniture Manufacture	Bo'ness and South Alloa	25 Jan.		
	North East Coast†	1 Jan.		
Furniture Manufacture	Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, and Brighouse	1st full pay in Jan.		
	York and Ripon ...	1st full pay in Jan.		
Furniture Manufacture	Birmingham, West Bromwich, and Wolverhampton	Pay day in week ending 1 or 2 Feb.		
	Birmingham and West Bromwich	Pay day in week ending 1 Feb.		
	Beith and Lochwinnoch	1 Jan.		Increase of 1d. per hour for men and 1/2d. per hour for women. Minimum rates after change: men, 1s. 4 1/2d.; women, 8d.

* The change took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour index number of retail prices.
† Including Tottington, Whitefield, Radcliffe, Walmsley, Entwistle, Ramsbottom, Accrington and Westhoughton.
‡ The change took effect under an agreement made between the London Employers' Association Ltd. and the Metropolitan Needlework Section of the Assistants' Union.
§ The increase took effect under an agreement arrived at by the Joint Industrial Council for the Seed Crushing and Compound Cake Manufacturing Industry.
¶ The provision previously in force which restricted the application of rates to apprentices indentured in the form prescribed by the Trade Board has also effect from 14th January, 1924 been extended to apprentices indentured in this or any other form approved by the Trade Board.
‡ Including Newcastle, North and South Shields, Sunderland, Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Stockton, West Hartlepool, and Darlington.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING JANUARY, 1924—(continued).

Industry.	Locality.	Date from which change took effect.	Classes of Workpeople.	Particulars of change. (Decreases in italics.)
Printing	London ...	Pay day in week ending 5 Jan.	PAPER, PRINTING AND ALLIED TRADES. Printers' assistants employed by master printers on letter-press, rotary and intaglio machines— Brake hands and oilers ... Reel hands, fly hands, etc. Revisers and assistants (adult males) employed by master printers:— Composing department: Linotype assistants ... Proof pullers Reading department: Revisers Copyholders	Web magazine presses divided into three grades, according to the web width of the machines with two classes of machines* in each grade; and weekly rates of wages fixed as follows:— Varying from 83s. 6d. to 89s. 6d., according to grade and classification. Varying from 81s. to 87s., according to grade and classification. Weekly rates of wages adopted for daywork and nightwork as follows:— Daywork, 73s. 6d.; nightwork, 104s. 9d. Daywork, 73s. 6d., or 76s. 6d.; nightwork, 104s. 9d. or 110s. 3d. Daywork, 70s.; nightwork, 101s. 3d. Daywork, 60s.; nightwork, 85s. 6d.
			BUILDING AND ALLIED TRADES (including Works of Construction). Building trade operatives ... Building trade operatives ... Building trade operatives ... Painters Monumental masons Asphalte workers	Increase of 1/2d. per hour for craftsmen (1s. 3 1/2d. to 1s. 4d.), and to a rate of 1s. per hour for labourers.† Increase of 1/2d. per hour for craftsmen (1s. 6 1/2d. to 1s. 7d.) and 1d. per hour for labourers (1s. 2d. to 1s. 2 1/2d.).‡ Increase of 1/2d. per hour. Rates after change: craftsmen, 1s. 4 1/2d.; labourers, 1s. 0 1/2d.† Rates adopted of 1s. 5 1/2d. per hour for craftsmen and 1s. 1 1/2d. per hour for labourers.† Increase of 1d. per hour (1s. 4 1/2d. to 1s. 5 1/2d.). Increase of 3d. per hour. Rates after change: Edinburgh, 1s. 7d.; Glasgow, 1s. 8d. Increase of 1/2d. per hour. Rates after change: spreaders, 1s. 5 1/2d.; potmen and labourers, 1s. 2 1/2d.
Building and Allied Trades	Ambleside and District York ...	16 Nov., 1923 1 Jan.	Building trade operatives ...	Increase of 1/2d. per hour for craftsmen (1s. 3 1/2d. to 1s. 4d.), and to a rate of 1s. per hour for labourers.†
	Colchester ...	11 Jan.	Building trade operatives ...	Increase of 1/2d. per hour. Rates after change: craftsmen, 1s. 4 1/2d.; labourers, 1s. 0 1/2d.†
Building and Allied Trades	Welwyn Garden City	2 Nov., 1923	Building trade operatives ...	Rates adopted of 1s. 5 1/2d. per hour for craftsmen and 1s. 1 1/2d. per hour for labourers.†
	Aberdeen Edinburgh and Glasgow	17 Oct., 1923	Painters Monumental masons	Increase of 1d. per hour (1s. 4 1/2d. to 1s. 5 1/2d.). Increase of 3d. per hour. Rates after change: Edinburgh, 1s. 7d.; Glasgow, 1s. 8d.
Building and Allied Trades	London ...	1 Jan.	Asphalte workers	Increase of 1/2d. per hour. Rates after change: spreaders, 1s. 5 1/2d.; potmen and labourers, 1s. 2 1/2d.
			TRANSPORT TRADES. Certain classes of railway servants in traffic grades:— Male workers 20 years of age and over§ Female workers Certain other classes of workers employed by Railway Companies:— Men in receipt of a war wage of 2s. per week (canal workers, etc.) Female part-timers (charwomen, cleaners, etc.) Gatekeepers (wives of Companies' servants) Certain classes of workpeople employed by Railway Companies at docks (including men on hydraulic and steam pumping plant), on dredgers and hopper barges, tug boats, small passenger and lake steamers, tenders and ferry boats Railway police (except uniform or detective inspectors) Engine drivers and firemen:— Men paid on a mileage basis ... Drivers of shunting engines (not performing train miles or working with a brake van) and shed yard engines, and men engaged in preparing or disposal of engines	Increase of 1s. per week in those cases in which there remained a sliding scale bonus of 2s. per week or over prior to the last reduction in July, 1923.¶ Increase of 1s. per week to women in receipt of a war wage of 15s. per week, and of 6d. per week to girls in receipt of a war wage of 7s. 6d. per week. Increase of 1s. per week. Bonuses, previously paid, increased by 6d. per week on base rates up to 9s. 11d., and by 9d. per week on base rates of 10s. and over, subject to maximum bonuses, varying with base rates from 3s. to 11s. 3d. per week. War wage increased from 3s. to 3s. 6d. per week. Increase of 1s. per week in those cases in which there remained a sliding scale bonus of 2s. per week or over prior to the last reduction in July, 1923.¶
Railway Service	Great Britain ...	1 Jan.		
Dock, Wharf, Riverside, etc., Labour	Various ports in England and Scotland**	1st full pay week in Jan.	Coal tipplers, teamers, weighers, holstmen and boxmen	Increase of 1s. per week. Rates after change for constables: 62s. per week in first year, increasing to 72s. after ten years' service (plus 3s. extra if working in London). A day's pay to be reckoned as a travelling distance of 130 miles instead of 120 as previously, beyond which mileage payments are to accrue at the same rate as previously (viz., one hour's pay for every 15 miles of such excess).¶ Maximum rate of wages to be 14s. per day after 4 years' service instead of 15s. after 5 years' service, such alterations to be subject to the conditions that no men at present receiving 15s. per day shall suffer a reduction; that men with 5 years' service, if engaged on work other than shunting, etc., shall receive 15s. per day when so employed; and that after an aggregate period of 313 days (calculated from time a man reached the 14s. rate), either consecutively or intermittently, in working main line trains, the rate shall not be reduced below 15s. if and when the men are put back on to shunting, etc., duties.¶ Increase of 5 per cent., making wages 105 per cent. above pre-war tariffs and payments for incidentals, subject to the minimum wage of 60s. per week previously in force.

* Class I.: Presses running one main reel printing single colour.
Class II.: Presses running one main reel printing single colour and one or two colours on wrapper or main reel single colour and set-off reel.
† This increase in wages resulted from the up-grading of the districts concerned, under the Grading Scheme of the National Wages and Conditions Council for the Building Industry (see page 222 of GAZETTE for June, 1923).
‡ The increase took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour index number of retail prices.
§ The increase applied to a majority of the workpeople, other than engine drivers and firemen, shunters, and passenger and goods guards, and the majority of signalmen. Other classes, besides those mentioned above, to whom the increase did not apply, on account of the residuary sliding scale bonus (prior to July, 1923) being less than 2s. per week, included shed engine-men and their mates, ticket and excess luggage collectors, station and yard foremen, traffic regulators, carriage and wagon examiners, hydraulic engine-men and chargemen cleaners in loco sheds, motor-bus drivers, horse and motor-bus conductors, and fire brigade men.
¶ The increase applied in the great majority of cases; the principal classes to whom it did not apply included mooring men at docks, engineers on small tugs, and engineers, engine-men, boatwains and leading seamen on small passenger steamers, etc.
** The above changes are in accordance with the terms of the findings of the National Wages Board, as modified subsequently by mutual agreement. In the case of men paid upon a mileage basis, it was agreed that a day's pay should be reckoned on a travelling distance of 140 miles from the first pay week in July, and on 150 miles from the first pay week in January, 1925, unless in the interval it should be agreed upon otherwise.
*** The increase applied to the principal coal exporting centres, including those on the North East Coast, and at Hull, Grimsby, Immingham, Leith, Methil, Burntisland, and Bo'ness. The increase did not apply to the Bristol Channel Ports.

TRADE DISPUTES.*

Number, Magnitude and Duration.—The number of trade disputes involving a stoppage of work, reported to the Department as beginning in January in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was 37, as compared with 12 in the previous month and 54 in January, 1923. In these new disputes about 79,000 workpeople were involved, either directly or indirectly (i.e., thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, though not themselves parties to the disputes). In addition, about 4,000 workpeople were involved, either directly or indirectly, in 11 disputes which began before January and were still in progress at the beginning of that month. The number of new and old disputes was thus 48, involving about 83,000 workpeople, and resulting in a loss during January of about 629,000 working days. The principal new dispute was that involving about 69,000 locomotive engine drivers, firemen and others on railways throughout Great Britain, and which was in progress from 21st to 29th January (see special article on pages 41 and 42).

Causes.—Of the 37 disputes beginning in January, 7, directly involving 800 workpeople, arose out of demands for advances in wages; 7, directly involving 60,200 workpeople, out of proposed reductions in wages; 12, directly involving 4,800 workpeople, on other wages questions; 5, directly involving 2,200 workpeople, on details of working arrangements; and 6, directly involving 1,000 workpeople, on questions respecting the employment of particular classes or persons.

Results.—Settlements were effected in the case of 19 new disputes, directly involving 64,000 workpeople, and 5 old disputes, directly involving 1,000 workpeople. Of these new and old disputes, 7, directly involving 3,000 workpeople, were set-

tled in favour of the workpeople; 7, directly involving 1,000 workpeople, in favour of the employers; and 10, directly involving 61,000 workpeople, were compromised. In the case of 5 disputes, directly involving 1,000 workpeople, work was resumed pending negotiations.

The following Table analyses the disputes in progress in January, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, by groups of industries, and indicates the number of workpeople involved (whether directly or indirectly) at the establishments concerned, and the approximate time lost during the month in all disputes in progress:—

Table with 6 columns: Groups of Industries, Started before 1st Jan., Started in Jan., Total, Number of Disputes in progress in January, Number of Workpeople involved in all Disputes in progress in January, Aggregate Duration in Working Days of all Disputes in progress in January.

PRINCIPAL TRADE DISPUTES IN PROGRESS DURING JANUARY, 1924

Table with 6 columns: Occupations and Locality, Approximate Number of Workpeople Involved, Date when Dispute Began/Ended, Cause or Object, Result.

* Disputes involving less than 10 workpeople, and those which lasted less than one day, have, as usual, been omitted from the statistics, except when the aggregate duration (i.e., number of workpeople multiplied by number of working days, allowing for workpeople replaced by others, etc.) exceeded 100 days.

BUILDING PLANS.

FIGURES showing the total estimated cost of buildings for which plans were approved in January in 137 of the principal urban areas in Great Britain, from which returns were received, are given on page 54. It is proposed that the detailed Table, giving statistics for various geographical areas, which has hitherto appeared in each issue of this GAZETTE, shall in future be published at quarterly intervals, beginning with the April GAZETTE.

ASSISTED PASSAGES UNDER THE EMPIRE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1922.

THE number of assisted passages granted during January, 1924, 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 10 columns: Assisted Passages Granted (Jan., Dec., 1924, 1922, 1923), Departures (Jan., Dec., 1924, 1922, 1923), Assisted Passage Schemes (To Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Dominion of Canada, Province of Ontario), Minor Schemes, TOTAL.

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

* Revised figures.

DISEASES OF OCCUPATIONS.*

THE total number of cases of poisoning and of anthrax in Great Britain and Northern Ireland reported under the Factory and Workshop Act during January, 1924, was 61. Three deaths were reported during the month, one due to lead poisoning in the pottery industry, one due to epitheliomatous ulceration (tar), and one due to anthrax in the handling and sorting of hides and skins. In addition, eight cases of lead poisoning (including two deaths) among house painters and plumbers came to the knowledge of the Home Office during January, but notification of these cases is not obligatory.

Table with 2 columns: (a) CASES OF LEAD POISONING, (b) CASES OF OTHER FORMS OF POISONING, (c) CASES OF ANTHRAX. Lists occupations and number of cases.

FATAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.†

THE number of workpeople, other than seamen, reported as killed in the course of their employment in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during January, 1924, was 232, as compared with 225 in the previous month, and with 196 a year ago.

Table with 2 columns: FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS, MINES, QUARRIES over 20 feet deep. Lists types of accidents and number of deaths.

* Based on Returns from the Home Office and from the Ministry of Labour for Northern Ireland.

† Cases include all attacks reported to the Home Office during the month and not previously reported, so far as is known, during the preceding 12 months.

‡ Cases of lead poisoning in shipbreaking (due to inhalation of lead fumes generated when cutting with an oxy-acetylene flame) have hitherto been included under "Plumbing and Soldering." The numbers of such cases reported during 1922 and 1923, respectively, were 17 and 38.

§ Of the four persons affected in the Pottery industry two were females.

|| Based on Returns from the Home Office, the Mines Department, the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Labour for Northern Ireland.

POOR LAW RELIEF IN GREAT BRITAIN.

(Data supplied by the Ministry of Health in England and Wales and by the Board of Health in Scotland.)

THE number of persons relieved on one day* in January, 1924, in the thirty-one selected areas named below was 908,894, or 7.1 per cent. more than in the previous month, and 5.6 per cent. less than in January, 1923. The numbers relieved at these three dates were equivalent, respectively, to rates of 514, 479 and 555§ per 10,000 of the estimated population.

In the twenty-five selected areas in England and Wales the number of persons relieved in January, 1924, was 749,988, or 480 per 10,000 of the estimated population. In the six areas in Scotland the number relieved was 158,906, or 768 per 10,000 of the estimated population.

Recipients of indoor relief in the thirty-one districts in January numbered 129,095, or 2.2 per cent. more than in the previous month, and 2.1 per cent. more than in January of last year. Recipients of outdoor relief numbered 779,799, an increase of 8.0 per cent. on the previous month, and a decrease of 6.8 per cent. on a year ago.

All except two districts showed increases in the number per 10,000 relieved in January, 1924, as compared with December, 1923; districts showing the most marked increases were Sheffield (94 per 10,000), Wolverhampton (79 per 10,000), Hull (73 per 10,000), Stockton and Tees (69 per 10,000), East London (67 per 10,000), and Birmingham (62 per 10,000). Compared with January, 1923, twenty-three districts showed decreases and seven showed increases. Considerable decreases were recorded in the districts of Coatbridge and Airdrie (411 per 10,000), Stockton and Tees (277 per 10,000), Sheffield (199 per 10,000), and Birmingham (198 per 10,000). The most marked increase was in West Ham (45 per 10,000).

Table with 5 columns: Selected Urban Areas, Indoor, Outdoor, Total, Rate per 10,000 of Estimated Population, Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in rate per 10,000 of Population as compared with a Month ago, Year ago.

Table with 5 columns: ENGLAND & WALES, Metropolitan, West District, North District, Central District, East District, South District, TOTAL, Metropolitan, West Ham.

Table with 5 columns: Other Districts, Newcastle District, Stockton and Tees District, Bolton, Oldham, etc., Wigan District, Manchester District, Liverpool District, Bradford District, Halifax and Huddersfield, Leeds District, Barnsley District, Sheffield District, Hull District, North Staffordshire, Nottingham District, Leicester District, Wolverhampton District, Birmingham District, Bristol District, Cardiff and Swansea.

Table with 5 columns: TOTAL "Other Districts", TOTAL, Districts in England and Wales.

Table with 5 columns: SCOTLAND, Glasgow District, Paisley & Greenock Dist., Edinburgh, Dundee and Dunfermline, Aberdeen, Coatbridge and Airdrie.

Table with 5 columns: TOTAL for the above Scottish Districts, TOTAL for above 31 Districts in January, 1921.

Table with 5 columns: TOTAL for above 31 Districts in January, 1921.

* The figures for England and Wales relate to 26th January, and those for Scotland to 15th January.

† These urban areas include in the case of England and Wales more than one poor-law union, except in the Leicester, Birmingham, and West Ham districts; and more than one parish in the case of Scotland, except in the Aberdeen and Edinburgh districts.

‡ Exclusive of casuals, of lunatics in Asylums, Registered Hospitals and Licensed Houses, and of persons receiving out-door medical relief only.

§ The figures previously published for January, 1923, have been revised.

SWEDEN.*

Unemployment in November.—Trade unions with an aggregate membership of 132,734 reported 12,110, or 9.1 per cent., as unemployed on the last day of November, as compared with 8.1 per cent. on 31st October and with 17.2 per cent. on 30th November, 1922. The following Table gives particulars for the principal unions included in the returns:—

Unions.	Membership reporting on 30th Nov., 1923.	Percentage Unemployed.		
		30th Nov., 1923.	31st Oct., 1923.	30th Nov., 1922.
All Unions making Returns ..	132,734	9.1	8.1	17.2
PRINCIPAL UNIONS:—				
Iron and steel	7,858	6.1	5.0	18.0
Engineering	31,245	10.7	10.7	25.0
Textile	6,582	2.0	1.7	2.8
Clothing	4,251	7.5	7.1	8.9
Foot, shoe and leather ..	6,880	3.6	3.4	6.3
Food preparation	3,080	8.8	8.3	10.6
Tobacco	3,064	3.2	3.1	2.0
Sawmilling	6,540	19.4	15.2	23.7
Woodworking	7,094	15.6	11.9	24.1
Paper and pulp	6,769	3.4	2.9	8.2
Municipal workers	7,327	2.9	1.8	2.7
Commercial employees ..	6,106	6.8	6.8	8.5
General and factory workers (trades not specified)	13,660	14.5	15.2	23.7

DENMARK.†

Unemployment in December.—Returns supplied to the Danish Statistical Department by trade unions and by the Central Employment Exchange show that, out of 248,997 workpeople, 16.0 per cent. were unemployed on 28th December last, as compared with 11.4 per cent. on 30th November and with 20.3 per cent. at the end of December, 1922.

UNITED STATES.‡

Employment in December.—The Federal Department of Labour publishes preliminary figures relating to the volume of employment in December, 1923, based on returns from 7,408 establishments in 52 manufacturing industries, covering 2,448,370 workpeople. These establishments in November reported 2,434,503 persons employed, and the December figures consequently indicate a net decrease amounting to 1.5 per cent. in numbers employed. The aggregate wages paid show for the same period a decrease of 1.7 per cent., and the average weekly

* *Societa Meddelanden*, No. 1, 1924. Stockholm.
† *Statistiske Efterretninger*, 22nd January, 1924. Copenhagen.
‡ *Employment in Selected Industries in December, 1923*. Federal Bureau of Labour Statistics, Washington, D.C.

LEGAL CASES, OFFICIAL NOTICES, &c.

LEGAL CASES AFFECTING LABOUR.

Trade Union Rates and Relief Work.

MEMBER OF UNION CHARGEABLE TO THE POOR LAW—REFUSAL OF WORK PROVIDED BY PUBLIC BODY—PROSECUTION UNDER THE VAGRANCY ACT.

In this case the King's Bench Divisional Court was called upon to decide whether a man—in this case a navy, and a member of the National Union of Workers—who, having become chargeable to the Poor Law, refused work provided by a public body, because the wages were below the Trade Union rates, could be convicted under the Vagrancy Act as an idle and disorderly person.

In May, 1923, the navy, Arthur Nice, was convicted "of being an idle and disorderly person in that he, on the 6th April, 1923, being a person able to work and wholly to maintain himself and his family, unlawfully and wilfully did refuse and neglect so to do, by which refusal and neglect himself and his family, whom he was then legally bound to maintain, became and then were chargeable to the common fund of the Lewisham Union." In March, 1923, in common with others, he received a circular letter from the Guardians stating that the Guardians had made arrangements with the Lewisham Borough Council whereby unemployed men might be afforded an opportunity of doing some work instead of receiving assistance from the rates, the wages to be £2 6s. per week for 47 hours. Nice attended and worked on 27th, 28th and 29th March, in accordance with the offer contained in this letter, but on the 31st he declined to continue on the ground that £2 6s. was less than the current Trade Union rate of wages for such work. As a result he was unable to maintain himself, his wife and children, and they became chargeable to the Lewisham Union. At the Quarter Sessions Nice gave evidence that he was anxious to work, and stated that the sole reason for his refusal was that his Trade Union would not allow it, and that if he continued to work at this rate he would not be able to get employment in the future. A Trade Union official said that the Trade Union rate was £3 2s. 8d., and that if Nice worked for less he would have been reprimanded, fined or expelled by his Union, and that in the future it would have been difficult for him to get work. The Court of Quarter Sessions was of opinion that by continuing to work after the 31st of March for £2 6s. a week Nice would have been losing a chance of bettering himself, and prejudicing his chances of employment

in the future. They accordingly allowed the appeal, and quashed the conviction.

On appeal by the Guardians, the Lord Chief Justice upheld the decision of the Quarter Sessions. During the hearing of the appeal in the Divisional Court, Mr. Justice Greer said he found it difficult to believe that a Trade Union would register a black mark against a member for the rest of his life because, in order to save his family from starvation, he worked for less wage than the Union minimum, especially when he was working for the very people who paid him relief from the rates. Mr. Justice Avory said it was unfortunate that some authoritative decision could not be come to as to the legality of the action of the Union in this case in preventing this man from working at a wage which would have enabled him to maintain his wife and family, and which he was willing to accept.—*Lewisham Guardians v. Nice*. Divisional Court. 25th January, 1924.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACTS.

DECISIONS GIVEN BY THE UMPIRE.

VOLUMES containing the collected decisions of the Umpire, appointed under Section 12 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920, respecting disputed claims to benefit, are published by H.M. Stationery Office.

Cases after No. 2000 are not published in volume form, but summaries of the decisions are printed in pamphlets issued at approximately fortnightly intervals. The pamphlets will be supplied post free, as and when issued, for an annual subscription of 7s. 6d., payable in advance. All applications should be made to H.M. Stationery Office or at any of the addresses shown on the front cover of this Gazette.

The following are recent decisions of general interest:—

CASE No. 6051, SECTION 8 (4).—NO CONTRIBUTIONS DURING INSURANCE YEAR, 1921-1922—FAILURE TO PAY CONTRIBUTIONS IN FOLLOWING YEAR DUE TO SICKNESS—DISQUALIFICATION NOT REMOVED.

The applicant, who had last been employed as an assistant driller for three years ending May, 1921, lodged a claim for benefit on 6th July, 1923. The claim was, however, dis-

allowed under Section 8 (4) on the ground that the applicant had no contributions to his credit in respect of the Insurance Year 1921-1922. It was stated the applicant was unemployed from May, 1921, to 10th April, 1922. From April, 1922, up to 20th April, 1923, he was in receipt of treatment allowance from the Ministry of Pensions and for the greater part of this time he was in hospital. He was finally certified as fit for light work on 7th July, 1923. During the two Insurance Years, 1921-1922 and 1922-1923, therefore, the applicant had paid no unemployment insurance contributions. It was submitted that the non-payment of contributions during the Insurance Year 1921-1922 could not be regarded as being due to sickness, because the applicant was sick for only 3½ months of that year. The applicant was, therefore, disqualified under Section 8 (4) for the Insurance Year 1922-1923, until 12 contributions had been paid during that year, but he had been prevented from paying these 12 contributions, owing to sickness. The point at issue, therefore, was whether the failure to pay the 12 contributions owing to sickness removed the disqualification under Section 8 (4).

Recommended by the Court of Referees that the claim for benefit should be allowed. The Court, after considering Section 8 (4), were of opinion that the applicant was entitled to benefit as from 7th July, 1923, the date on which he was certified as being fit for work.

The Insurance Officer declined to accept the Court's recommendation. In his opinion Section 8 (4) was satisfied for the Insurance Year 1922-1923, but it was not satisfied for the previous Insurance Year, and, accordingly, the applicant could not receive benefit until 12 further contributions had been paid.

Decision.—"On the facts before me my decision is that the claim for benefit should be disallowed.

"No contributions were paid in respect of the applicant during the Insurance Year 1921-1922, and I agree with the Insurance Officer that the non-payment of those contributions is not shown to have been due to his being sick. He is accordingly disqualified until 12 contributions have been paid by him. The fact that the non-payment of the required subsequent 12 contributions was due to sickness does not remove the disqualification."

CASE No. 6064, SECTION 7 (1) (iii).—SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT, REFUSAL OF—WORK AT A DISTANCE—REFUSAL TO ALLOW PARTICULARS TO BE SUBMITTED—ALLEGED MORE MEN NOTIFIED OF JOBS THAN COULD HAVE OBTAINED THE WORK.

The applicant, a collier, had been unemployed for about 12 months, when on 3rd May, 1923, he refused an offer of piecework in a colliery about 115 miles from his home. The minimum wage for the work was 8s. 5d. per day of 7 hours and the work was expected to be permanent.

The applicant, a single man, refused the offer because the Exchange was unable to give him the name of the colliery at which the work was offered. He also alleged that there were no lodgings to be had near the colliery.

Recommended by the Court of Referees that the claim for benefit should be disallowed on the ground that the applicant had not shown just cause for refusing the offer.

The applicant's association appealed against the recommendation of the Court of Referees and, at an oral hearing before the Umpire, it was alleged on their behalf that at the colliery in question there were, at the most, only two vacancies for men, whereas the vacancies had been given such wide circulation that a number of men had been asked to accept the jobs, and, of four men who were submitted, none was engaged by the employer.

Further information was obtained on this point, and it was ascertained that the employers had notified vacancies for 12 men. There was no local labour available, and, accordingly, with the employers' consent, the vacancies were given a larger circulation. The particulars of a number of men were then submitted to the employers, who selected 13 men from various localities, including four from the applicant's district. None of the selected men accepted the jobs, and finally the employers decided to engage only local labour as and when it became available. In this way 26 men were engaged, and at the time of the report there were still vacancies for others.

Decision.—"On the facts before me my decision is that the claim for benefit should be disallowed.

"I am satisfied that the employment of which the applicant was notified was suitable. It must ordinarily happen that the number of persons notified exceeds the number of vacancies, so that not all those notified could get the employment if all applied for it. I have no reason to suppose, however, that notification of these vacancies was made to an unreasonable extent, and as the applicant failed to apply, he does not satisfy me that he was unable to obtain suitable employment."

CASE No. 6127, SECTION 8 (1).—TRADE DISPUTE—APPRENTICE CARPENTER SUSPENDED OWING TO BOILERMAKERS' LOCK-OUT—ALLEGED BREACH OF APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT BY EMPLOYERS.

A firm of shipbuilders reported that the applicant, an apprentice carpenter, had been suspended on 23rd June, 1923, owing to a stoppage of work caused by a boilermakers' lock-out, which began on 30th April, 1923.

The applicant stated that at the time of his suspension he had completed four years out of his five years' apprenticeship. He was told that he would be sent for when his services were again required.

Recommended by the Court of Referees that the claim for benefit should be disallowed on the ground that the applicant had lost employment owing to the lock-out. Leave to appeal was granted.

On appeal the applicant stated that the employers had not the right to suspend him. When he accepted employment he was guaranteed five years' work as an apprentice at a wage of £2 per week.

Decision.—"On the facts before me my decision is that the claim for benefit should be disallowed.

"I agree with the recommendation of the Court of Referees, that the applicant's loss of employment was due to a stoppage of work due to a trade dispute. It is suggested that the employers broke their agreement with the applicant by discharging him. If this is so (and I express no opinion on the question), it does not alter the fact that the discharge was by reason of the trade dispute."

RECENT CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION CASES.

INDUSTRIAL COURT DECISIONS.

FERRIES FLOATING STAFF—BIRKENHEAD CORPORATION—SLIDING SCALE AGREEMENT—INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION—COST OF LIVING.—*Birkenhead Town Council v. The National Sailors' and Firemen's Union*. Decision.—The cardinal feature of the scheme under the sliding scale agreement is that 75 points are taken as the datum line or starting point, and the variations in wages, up or down, are always to be calculated as from 75. If there is a variation of 5 points from 75, an alteration will take place; if less than 5 points, no alteration will take place. For example, when the cost of living fell to 69 an alteration took place in the wages, as there had been a fall of full 5 points from 75; when the cost of living rose to 71 the wages required to be adjusted to the rate at which they stood when at 75, as at 71 there was no change of 5 points from 75. When the cost of living rose to 77, no adjustment was necessary under the Agreement, as there was no variation of 5 points above 75. Should the cost of living rise, for instance, to 79, there will still be no alteration in wages, as there will be no variation of 5 points about 75. Should, however, the cost of living rise to 80, there will be an alteration in wages, as there will have been a variation of full 5 points above 75. The examples may be multiplied, but these will be sufficient to show how the Agreement operates in practice. Issued 3rd January, 1924. (861.)

WINDOW CLEANERS, EUSTON—DECISION No. 723, SCHEDULE F, CONDITION 11—"HEIGHT MONEY"—NORMAL AND CUSTOMARY DUTIES OF CLASS.—*The National Union of Railwaymen v. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway*. Decision.—Having regard to the circumstances and the duties of a window cleaner, it does not appear to the Court that the work in question is of an "exceptionally . . . dangerous character" within Condition 11, and therefore the men concerned are not entitled to an extra payment. Issued 15th January, 1924. (862.)

BANK AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS—MEN ON RUNNING REPAIRS—RATE OF PAY—DECISION No. 728, SCHEDULE F, CONDITION 7.—*The National Union of Railwaymen v. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway*. Decision.—The Court find that, in terms of Condition 7 of Schedule F to Decision No. 723, the normal work was not suspended on the days in question, and that accordingly the claim has not been established. Issued 15th January, 1924. (863.)

MERIT ALLOWANCES—WITHDRAWAL BY LONDON, MIDLAND AND SCOTTISH RAILWAY—DECISION No. 723, PARAGRAPH 29—INDIVIDUAL CASES—EXERCISE OF DISCRETION OF MANAGEMENT.—*The Amalgamated Engineering Union v. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway*. Before the coming into operation of Decision No. 723, the men in question were paid the ordinary and customary rates for their respective occupations, but when the Decision was applied the company reduced them to the scheduled rates of pay. The Union claimed that the men were protected by paragraph 29 of the Decision, as the reduction was a withdrawal of a "merit" allowance, which was not justified by the Decision, and should be restored. Following previous Decisions of the Court, the company have restored the merit rate to between 70 and 80 members of the Union at Crewe. According to the company's evidence the case of each of the men enumerated in the Union's list of men affected had been considered individually on its merits, and the management hold that each is doing the customary and ordinary duties of his occupation and is not recognised by the management as doing anything other than that. In regard to six smiths working on "heavy fires" at Crewe Old Works, the company stated that the men were still in receipt of their previous base rate of 48s. per week, and should the Union prove that the men were receiving less than that rate, they would be paid the higher rate retrospectively. The company's representative also undertook to investigate a complaint as to the method of remuneration of the turner at Rugby, included in the Union's list. Decision.—As was explained in Decision No. 814, regarding the procedure proper to be adopted in the exercise by the company of their right to review any special ratings, the Court took the view that a differentiation could properly be made between extra payments granted to individuals in respect of their individual qualifications or skill and an extra payment made to a group of workpeople. In the former case, the matter is one for settlement between the man concerned and the company;

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