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LABOUR GAZETTE

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THE OBJECTS OF THE "LABOUR GAZETTE."

THE LABOUR GAZETTE is a journal for the use of workmen, and of all others interested in obtaining prompt and accurate information on matters specially affecting labour. It is intended to stand to labour questions in the same relation as the *Board of Trade Journal* to questions of trade and commerce. In other words, official information bearing on the interests of labour will be adapted for general use and made public, including information which the Department obtains from its correspondents largely for the purpose of publication.

WITH mere questions of opinion the LABOUR GAZETTE will not be concerned. The aim of the Department in the publication is to provide a sound basis for the formation of opinions, and not to supply opinions. In performing this task there are three classes of materials which have to be dealt with. First, there is the information bearing on labour which is already collected and published periodically by various Government Departments, but which, as yet, is not readily accessible to the vast mass of workmen, either because it is buried in large and expensive publications, or because workmen have not, as a rule, the means of knowing when and how it can be obtained. There is again much useful information published by Foreign Governments, which is inaccessible to British workmen for the same reasons, with the additional barrier offered by an unfamiliar language. It is intended to collect and sift this information, to publish month by month such parts of it as can be included in the GAZETTE, and, so far as possible, to add references to the remainder. In the present number are included such items as the Monthly Report on the State of Employment, the returns of Emigration and Immigration, and the summaries of various British and Foreign Reports, such as the last published Annual Report on Strikes and Lock-outs, Trade Unions, and other subjects.

IN the second place, there is much information which is already obtained through various official channels, but which has hitherto not been published at all, or issued after the public interest in the subject has, to some extent, subsided. The Labour Department is enabled, by the courtesy of the various Government Offices concerned, to present, for the first time, monthly or quarterly reports on several matters which have hitherto been only the subject of less full or less frequent returns. As examples of such information in the present number, reference may be made to the list of Trade Unions, Co-operative, and Friendly Societies registered and dissolved during the month, the returns of pauperism in the chief industrial districts of the United Kingdom, of prosecutions under the Factory and Workshop Acts, and of accidents to railway servants and in factories and workshops.

IN the third place there are many matters of importance on which exact information has not hitherto

been obtained, or at least has not been officially collected. Some of these questions will probably always elude exact investigation; many others will require to be made the subject of searching special inquiries before they are ripe for precise treatment in a monthly journal. There are, however, a few cases in which it is proposed at once to begin to break fresh ground. Thus, in the present number it is possible, through the Local Correspondents of the Department, connected for the most part with important trade organizations, to supply a series of statements from the workmen's point of view as to the conditions of employment in the chief centres of industry. With regard to one important group of irregularly employed labour in the port of London, the daily changes in the volume of employment are shown in the form of a chart, which, though referring only to a small fraction of the low-skilled labour of London, may to some extent serve as a useful barometer of employment, so far as concerns the waterside and carrying industries of the port. The Department would be glad to extend the information to waterside and other labour in other districts, and would welcome any suggestions to that end.

AN account is given in the GAZETTE of the chief labour disputes and changes in rates of wages and hours of labour of which information has been received during the month. In the preparation of these tables much valuable help has been given by Trade Unions, employers, and Employers' Associations. Arrangements have also been made for special short articles on important trade disputes, and such subjects as arbitration, conciliation, various methods of industrial remuneration, and the working of various laws bearing specially on labour. The trade disputes thus treated in the present number are the late Lancashire Cotton Dispute, and the Shipping strike now in progress at Hull.

THE Department is also endeavouring, chiefly through the machinery of the Workmen's Co-operative Societies, to obtain returns of average retail prices of the chief articles of workmen's consumption, based on a record of actual transactions. The returns so far obtained are given in another column, and will be repeated periodically. In addition, the Department has to thank the district secretaries of the Co-operative Union, for agreeing to supply materials for the Monthly Reports on Co-operation.

THROUGH the courtesy of the Foreign Office, the Department will be able to give periodical reports on the state of labour, trade disputes, changes in wages, and labour legislation in the principal foreign countries, obtained specially for the purpose through the British Embassies and Consulates. The Colonial Office have also kindly arranged with the Emigrants' Information Office, which has already for some time collected information as to the demand for labour, and the conditions of employment in the principal British Colonies, to furnish the Labour Department with material for monthly reports, of which the first appears in the present number.

THE STATE OF EMPLOYMENT IN APRIL.

I.—GENERAL SUMMARY.

RETURNS of unemployed members at the close of April have been received from 23 Trade Unions, with a total membership of 296,771, of which number 20,478, or 6.9 per cent., are reported as being out of work, against 25,622, or 8.7 per cent., in the previous month. The figures, however, for this month are still one per cent. higher than for the corresponding month of 1892. They can hardly be looked upon as indicating an upward movement of a lasting nature, but must rather be attributed to seasonal causes of a more or less fluctuating character. Six of the 23 societies describe trade as "good," 8 as "moderate," and 9 as "bad."

Notwithstanding the settlement of the dispute in the Cotton Trade, a large number of spinners in the Oldham district are still unemployed, the proportion having risen from 12 per cent. in April 1892 to 28 per cent. in April 1893. On the other hand, in the Bolton district, which was much less severely affected by the Cotton Dispute, the percentage of unemployed has fallen from 2.25 in the former to 1.85 in the latter period. Speaking generally, the Engineering Trades show a slight improvement when compared with last month, though when compared with the corresponding period of last year they are in an unsatisfactory condition, especially in the case of the Iron Shipbuilding Trades, in which the tendency is still a downward one. The Building and Furnishing Trades, as might be anticipated at this season of the year, continue to improve, and are generally in a good condition, while the Printing and kindred Trades have somewhat improved in the Metropolis, though a falling off is noticeable in the provinces, and also in Ireland and Scotland.

Seventy-three new disputes have been reported during the month, the most important being the strike in connection with the Dock and Shipping Industries in Hull, directly affecting about 10,000 men, which for some time threatened to spread to other ports. A general strike in the Shipping Industries has been averted, at least for the time, though local disturbances have taken place in the ports of London, Bristol, and elsewhere. Next in magnitude come three mining disputes, affecting 1,200, 1,000 and 800 miners respectively. It will be seen that the number of new strikes noted, viz., 73, is somewhat large, being 14 in excess of last month and 8 more than for the like period of 1892. In 36 of these strikes, for which full particulars have been received, 16,954 workers were concerned. In many cases, however, the numbers interested were small, and the disputes themselves of but short duration. Of the total 73 disputes, 23 occurred in the Building Trades, 11 in the Mining Industry, 9 in the Shipbuilding Industry, 8 in the Textile Trades, 7 in the Clothing Trades, 6 in connection with Shipping and Dock Labour, 5 in the Metal Trades, and the remaining 4 in various other trades and industries. Several of the disputes in the Building Trades were within the Metropolitan area, and arose from differences as to the enforcement of the agreement mutually entered into last year by the representatives of employers and workmen in those trades.

Taking three important groups of trades, viz., Building, Engineering, and Furnishing, and analysing the figures, the following results are obtained:—In the Building Trades (comprising carpenters, masons, plasterers, and plumbers), reports from 794 branches of unions, representing 52,441 members, show the state of trade to be as follows:—

	Branches.	Members.
"Fair" to "very good"	367	24,303
"Moderate" or "quiet"	258	16,246
"Dull" to "very bad"	169	11,892
	794	52,441

In these unions the percentage of unemployed is 2.27.

In the Engineering Trades (comprising engineers, iron-founders and pattern makers), reports from 610 branches of unions, representing 83,109 members, show the state of trade to be as follows:—

	Branches.	Members.
"Fair" to "very good"	21	1,576
"Moderate" or "quiet"	234	30,342
"Dull" to "very bad"	355	51,191
	610	83,109

In these unions the percentage of unemployed is 8.0.

In the Furnishing Trades (comprising cabinet-makers, chair-makers, carvers, turners, upholsterers and polishers), reports from 109 branches of unions, representing 6,455 members, show the state of trade to be as follows:—

	Branches.	Members.
"Fair" to "very good"	56	3,385
"Moderate" or "quiet"	21	2,116
"Dull" to "very bad"	24	954
	109	6,455

In these unions the percentage of unemployed is 2.48.

The most important changes of wages during April, of which the Department has received information, have been the fall in wages in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades in several districts of the North of England, and a rise in wages in various departments of the Building Trades in several towns. Fuller particulars of the changes are given in another column.

A further index of changes in the state of employment in the chief industrial districts is furnished by the particulars of pauperism published in another part of the GAZETTE. As might be expected, having regard to the advance of Spring, and the long-continued fine weather, every district in England shows a more or less marked improvement on the previous month. In London the proportion of paupers per 10,000 of population has fallen from 232 to 221, and in nineteen provincial districts, chiefly of an urban character, with a total population of nearly 7,500,000, the corresponding proportion has fallen from 211 to 201. The fall is naturally greatest in the Lancashire textile districts, where, doubtless owing to the cessation of the Cotton Dispute, the proportion has fallen from 193 to 156.

II.—REPORTS FROM LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Tyne and Wear District.—Mr. J. Ratcliffe reports that in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industries a more hopeful outlook prevails than in March. A marked improvement is manifest in the demand for skilled labour. The number of unemployed engineers in the Newcastle district, at present the most congested, show a visible decrease, and this remark applies also to the Wear and Tyne generally. Settlements have taken place in respect to reductions in wages claimed by employers all round; in all departments of the above trades, terms have been arranged with one or two exceptions. Reductions varying in amount from 2s. to 6d. on time rates, and 5 to 10 per cent. on piece prices, come into force in May. The Boiler-makers and Iron Shipbuilders exhibit the same upward tendency, the number receiving unemployed benefit being 500 less than in March; but the numbers out of work are still large. Shipyards maintain their normal condition; one or two are still busy, while others have difficulty in getting new work. Carpenters and Joiners are fairly well employed, and surplus labour is being drafted off to other districts, 50 to 60 men leaving the Wear for Belfast during the last fortnight. They are up to the present resisting all attempts to reduce wages. The Northumberland Collieries are working fairly steadily, with an average of 9½ days per fortnight throughout the county. Prices are recorded as being well maintained during the month. In 15 collieries there are between 300 and 400 men either idle or under notice. The average net selling price of coal for the quarter ending in February was 6d. per ton less than the average of the preceding quarter. The coal-owners at a meeting of representatives of miners and coal-owners held in April, considered themselves entitled to claim a reduction, but ultimately agreed to defer further action until the next ascertainment of prices. Much depression at present exists in the Durham Coal Trade; some collieries have discharged

large numbers of men, while others are only working five to nine days a fortnight, and in some cases only two days. It is estimated that fully 1,500 men are still idle. Generally speaking, however, it may be said that there is a perceptible improvement. Lead Factories are fully employed, Chemical Works are fairly busy, but the Copper Works are slightly depressed. Building operations are brisk, and the Plasterers have succeeded in obtaining an advance in wages in the Newcastle district. The half-yearly "Hinds Hiring" at Newcastle was held in April; while the number of men offering their services was greater than in former hirings, the number of wives was less; prices ranged from 16s. up to 23s. for good and known workers.

Oldham, Bolton and District.—Mr. J. T. Fielding reports that in the Building and Clothing Trades work is plentiful, the demand for workers in the tailoring branch being in excess of the supply. In the Iron and Engineering Trades employment is fairly steady, although overtime is not so prevalent as is sometimes the case. The Cotton Trade has settled down after its long stoppage, and the mills in the Bolton district are fully employed. The markets during the past month have been greatly affected by the fluctuations in the quotations for cotton "futures." All the spindles stopped during the recent lock-out were at once set going on a settlement being effected, but looms could not be started so expeditiously owing to a scarcity of yarn, and the re-starting has been a matter of somewhat slow progress. Oldham yarns scarcely maintained the rates current at the opening of the month, the margin between Middling American cotton and an average 32's twist yarn being 3d. per lb. on April 28th, as against 3½d. per lb. on March 31st. "Bolton" yarns have kept fairly steady during the month. Plain cloths have been unsatisfactory in price, and sales disappointing, this section of the trade not having fully recovered from the recent disturbance. Considerable agitation must be recorded amongst several sections of wage-earners in the district. In Bolton the Paper Mill Workers are agitating for a reduction in hours for females, who have asked to leave off at 1 p.m. on Saturdays instead of 2 p.m. In Oldham, two strikes have occurred in the Tailoring Trade, and one in the Cotton Industry. The first strike of the tailors was of a general character, and terminated in favour of the men. A further strike of tailors is still pending. The Cotton Reelers' strike against a reduction in wages has been partially successful.

Burnley, Accrington and District.—Mr. W. H. Wilkinson reports that the Weaving Branch of the Cotton Trade shows very little improvement; employers are not starting their looms to any great extent, in consequence of the low margin which prevails between yarns and cloth, and the result is that some thousands of looms are still standing idle. The Building Trades have been depressed for some time, but are improving. The Machine and Iron Works are fully occupied, and one firm is making large extensions to their works. In the Printing Trade workmen are fully employed. The Joiners' dispute at Colne has been settled after a stoppage of ten days, the employers agreeing to concede the required advance of ½d. an hour. The dispute as to measurement of looms at Rishton at the beginning of May has been settled, the employers agreeing to pay according to the measurements agreed to by the Secretaries of the Employers' and Operatives' Associations.

Manchester and District.—Mr. G. D. Kelley reports that trade remains in a depressed condition, with perhaps a slight change for the better. The depression resulting from the recent Cotton Dispute, which affected so many industries in this neighbourhood, still continues to exert some considerable influence on trading generally. A dispute has begun in Stockport among the Stonemasons, who have given six months' notice of their intended application for an advance in wages from 8½d. to 9d. per hour, which is the price paid in Manchester.

Liverpool and District.—Mr. J. Sexton reports that there has been little if any change for the better in the state of trade during the past month, and the tendency to improvement at the beginning of April in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades has not been sustained. All through the month there has been a spirit of unrest and insecurity as to the probability of the Hull dispute extending to Liverpool. Notwithstanding the large number of men—over 1,000—drafted from Liverpool to Hull by the employers, there are still a great number of men connected with the Shipping Industry out of employment. The relief works started by the Corporation, at the beginning of March, came to an end on April 28th. During the seven weeks of their existence, 350 men have received one week's wages, a fresh gang being put on each week, with the exception of a gang of about 12 practical men, who were employed constantly while the work lasted. The only industry that can be said to have made any permanent advance, is the Building Trade. Towards the end of the month, the employers conceded an advance of ½d. an hour, and a reduction of working hours, from 55 to 50 during the Summer

months, and 50 to 47½ during Winter; the change affecting 3,000 men. In the Chemical Industry, there are slight signs of an improvement, and new works are shortly to be erected at Ditton Marsh, near Widnes. The Tailors of Widnes are asking for an increase in wages, from 15 to 30 per cent. The long and severe struggle in the St. Helen's Bottle-making Industry having terminated, all the furnaces are being relighted, and the men are resuming work. The Coal Mining Industry in the neighbourhood of St. Helen's is in a very disturbed state. The grievances of the men are multifarious, the chief being attempted reductions of wages, and a system of working, which the men claim to be equivalent to a reduction. The employers are taking the men's complaints into consideration.

Middlesbrough, Stockton and District.—Mr. A. Main reports that trade has been slightly better during the last month. Extensive steel works, which have been closed more than three months, have been re-started in some departments, thus reducing the number of the unemployed at South Bank and Eston considerably. The Finished Iron Trade is very dull, but the Steel Trade is slightly better. The number of blast furnaces at work in this district is 87, as against 88 last month, and the Cleveland Ironstone Miners are fairly well employed. Work continues very scarce in the Engineering Trade, fully 10 per cent. of the men being unemployed. Shipbuilding generally is slack, few new contracts being reported. In Middlesbrough, however, one large yard is said to be very busy, and other yards are fairly employed. The men belonging to the Boilermakers' and Iron Shipbuilders' Society have agreed to a reduction of five per cent. off piece prices, and 1s. per week off time wages. A dispute has arisen at the ironstone mines of a firm at Skelton as to the conditions of working the newly introduced ratchet drilling machine. The question has been referred to the Joint Committee for consideration, and will probably be settled without any cessation of work. The strike of Builders' Labourers at Hartlepool still continues, and the men are being well supported by the National Labour Union and others. Several of the master builders have conceded the terms asked for, and their men are at work. The Painters of the district have been agitating for various concessions, and at Hartlepool and Middlesbrough the men are out on strike, with the exception of a few firms in Middlesbrough, who have signed the new code of rules. At Hartlepool the men are endeavouring to establish a co-operative society to carry on the work themselves. The strike of the Tailors for the general adoption of a time-log for Middlesbrough has been amicably arranged, the employers having accepted the log with certain alterations.

Leeds and District.—Mr. O. Connellan reports some improvement in the general condition of trade during the past month, but some industries, Iron especially, are still depressed. In the Engineering, the locomotive and tool-making branches are very slack, but a slight improvement is shown in the machine-making, boiler-making, and ironfounding departments; a small decrease has taken place among those signing the out-of-work book, but the number is still abnormal. Considerable improvement has been exhibited in the Leather Trade; the workmen in the largest tanning works in Leeds have recently worked full time, for the first time for over a twelvemonth. The Ready-made Clothing Trade, which was very slack in March, has now become brisk; the large factories are very busy, and in some cases overtime has been necessary. The bespoke branch of the trade is also very active, and there is every indication of a good summer trade. The resumption of work by the Glass Blowers was followed by considerable activity and briskness, which will probably continue for some time, owing to the large accumulation of orders during the dispute. The Building Trades continue brisk, and a good demand for workmen prevails, especially for bricklayers and masons; carpenters and joiners, however, are in only moderate demand. The ordinary Printing Trade has been dull, with a larger number of unemployed than usual. Night compositors engaged on daily morning papers have had an increase of ½d. per 1,000 ens. An advance has also been gained by the Plasterers, viz., ½d. per hour, dating from May 1st.

Bradford, Huddersfield and District.—Mr. A. Gee reports that in Huddersfield several woollen manufacturers are running their mills night and day; during the latter part of the month one worsted firm has begun night work, and another has begun to work two hours overtime. In Keighley, one or two firms in the Worsteds Trade have raised wages about 5 per cent. The Woollen Trade is quiet in Bradford, but not exceptionally so, and the same remark applies to the heavy woollen district, including Batley, Dewsbury, and the neighbourhood. The Iron Trade in Halifax has been somewhat depressed, and the employers have proposed a reduction in wages; at Keighley there is a slight improvement. The Tailors in Keighley are endeavouring to obtain an advanced rate of

wages. The Weavers' Association has declared the strike at Holmfirth at an end, but are giving "victimized" pay until further notice or until the men get work. The Wire Drawers' strike at Lindley, Huddersfield, which began seven months ago, is still going on. The Carpenters and Joiners of Bradford and district, who, six months ago, asked for an advance of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per hour on their rate of wages ($7\frac{1}{4}$ d. an hour), have accepted an advance of $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and have given notice that next year the additional $\frac{1}{4}$ d. will be asked for.

Barnsley and the Yorkshire Mining Districts (except Cleveland).—Mr. J. Wadsworth reports that in most of the collieries the men have only been employed four days a week, in some they have worked only two or three days. In a few cases, however, five and even six days have been worked. Several of the men thrown out of work by the closing of a colliery have obtained work in the Flockton Seam, which has been re-opened. The Dockers' Dispute at Hull has affected the Yorkshire Coal Trade to some extent. House coal is not much in demand, nor is there much demand for gas coal at some collieries. Notice has been given to 50 men at a colliery, near Rotherham, owing to depression of trade, and to 200 men at another colliery. The dispute at one colliery in the Warren House Seam still continues; the men have offered to accept arbitration, but the owners have refused. The men at the Swallow-wood Pit, Aldwarke Main Colliery, are still out. The Glass Bottle Dispute has been settled during the month, and the men are getting fairly well to work again, going in on their own terms after 16 weeks' absence. The Ironworkers in Yorkshire are affected, equally with those in the Midlands, by Sir Thomas Martineau's award of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. reduction in connection with the Midland Iron and Steel Wages Board.

Sheffield and District.—Mr. S. Uttley reports that on the whole, although there has been a slight improvement during the month, the state of trade in this district is bad. As regards the heavy trades there is no activity manifested, except in a few special lines, such as the manufacture of patent flues and tubes. In the Armour and Ship-plate, Tyre, Axle and Railway-Spring Trades, but little work is being done, and in many cases the men have not averaged more than one turn per week since Christmas, and are consequently in a most deplorable condition. The Railway Wagon and Carriage Builders are very short of orders, as are also the Iron and Steel Founders. With respect to the old staple industries, the Silver and Metal Trades are exceedingly quiet, as also are the Table and Spring-Knife Cutlery branches. The Razor Trade is very slack. Some makers of scissors are fairly well off for orders, but this is not general. The File Trade is moderate, the number of unemployed in this industry having decreased owing to some extent to the recent placing of Government orders. The demand for reaper files and for sheep shears has increased considerably owing to the season. There is a fair demand for certain classes of wire, and also for cycle steel, but generally the rolling mills are slack. For steel spades, shovels and forks for agricultural purposes the demand is maintained, this being the height of the season for such articles. In the Building Trades there is a fair amount of activity manifested, the long continued fine weather having been highly favourable to building operations. The Joiners' Tool Trade is fairly good, but the Engineers' Tool Trade is very quiet.

Hull and District.—Mr. W. G. Millington reports that the great dispute in the Shipping Industry which has been in progress for nearly the whole month overshadows everything else in importance so far as the conditions of labour in Hull are concerned. An account of the origin of this dispute is given elsewhere. Over 10,000 men are directly affected, but the influence of the prolonged dispute has extended to almost all the local workpeople, especially seed-crushers and men engaged in various trades connected with engineering and shipbuilding. Shopkeepers are also doing little business, and there is great distress in the town. The men on strike receive food tickets to the value of 6s. weekly, the funds being provided by subscriptions, which come in freely. 9,000 men received strike pay last week. Meanwhile the Shipping Federation is importing "free labourers" from time to time, but many appear to leave at the end of their fortnight's engagement, and the work of the port is going on slowly. All the chief groups of local industries, except the Building Trades, were seriously depressed before the dock strike, and the depression has been considerably increased by the dispute. In the Engineering and Shipbuilding Yards work is reduced to the lowest possible extent, short of actual stoppage, with the result that a large number of men dependent on such work are out of employment. The Trade Societies which give dispute pay have now a large number on their funds. The Iron Trades Employers' Association issued notices at the end of March for a general reduction in wages, with the result that the Engineers' Society agreed eventually to accept a reduction of 1s. a week from

1st May, and labourers in receipt of over 20s. a week a reduction of 6d. a week from 18th May. The Shipwrights received three months' notice of a reduction of 5 per cent. The Boiler-makers also received notice of a 5 per cent. reduction, but eventually came to an agreement with the employers on the basis of a reduction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on piecework rates, and of 1s. a week on time wages. A strike of Drillers and Hole-cutters at two firms was amicably settled after a few days, the point in dispute being a question of demarcation of work between these trades and that of the Boiler-makers. The Painters at Grimsby struck at the beginning of April for advanced wages; an amicable settlement was arrived at, the employers granting an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an hour, and a mutually revised code of rules.

Wolverhampton and District.—Mr. W. F. Mee reports that the commercial outlook for the past month in this district has not been very encouraging. A large number of Ironworkers are still unemployed. The gradual reduction in the wages of the Chainmakers ended in a strike on April 25th, for a return to the 5s. price list. Several firms have conceded the demand. In the Brass and Copper Trades short time is being worked, and there are many men seeking employment. There is no improvement manifested in the Galvanising, Hollow-ware Casting, and Light Iron Foundry Trades, and orders are still scarce. In the Hardware Trade there is a slight improvement, more especially in season orders; and there is a fair demand for ironwork for engineering, bridge-making, and roof work. There is also a slight improvement in the Iron and Tin-plate Trades. The Boot and Shoe Trade is well up for spring goods. The late strike at a firm in Stafford has terminated in favour of the men, and, as the firm has some large Government contracts, there is a demand for labour. The Tailors are fully employed, and trade is reported "steady" in the Letterpress Printing, Cabinet-making, and Electrical Trades. Owing to the lengthening days, the numbers of Gasworkers are being reduced, but they soon find work as Builders' Labourers. The genial weather has had a beneficial influence upon the Building and Out-Door Trades, and there is a slight demand for good men. It has also had its influence upon some branches of the Lock Trade, but the manufacturers have large stocks in hand. The Plumbers have had their wages increased from 8d. to 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hour, and have obtained a revised code of bye-laws, one employer alone refusing to comply with it. The Cycle Trade is in full swing, and there are some good orders in for export. The men are working from 15 to 18 hours a day, and in some cases double shifts are employed.

Birmingham and District.—Mr. W. J. Davis reports a slight improvement in the steadiness and regularity of trade, and the number out of employment has somewhat decreased, although many are but partially employed. Much privation was caused by protracted Easter holidays at certain works. The prolonged fine weather, on the other hand, enabled some season trades to start earlier than usual. Trades dependent on shopkeepers' custom have been busy, and the workers in them well employed; this has been the case, e.g., in the Boot and Shoe Trade. The Cycle Trade continues to expand, and a sub-division of manufacturing processes is becoming necessary under such heads as saddles, wheels, tyres, lamps and fittings. Employment is also found, in consequence, for many more workers in the Leather and Indiarubber Trades. The Tin Plate Workers employed on gear-cases by a firm in Coventry were granted an increase of from 1d. to 2d. an hour, and payment for overwork at the rate of time and a-quarter; they have also been put on the 48-hour system. The trade in Sporting Guns for export shows a slight improvement, as also that in Wire-working, Saddlery, and Enamelled Iron; the Metallic Bedstead, Tin-Plate and Metal Rolling Works are rather brisk. The Nail and Screw Trade is at present somewhat depressed, as also the Coach-Harness-Furniture and Printing Trades. There is hardly any change in regard to Flint Glass, Locks, Chains, and Engineering work; large orders under the last heading have been placed with a Handsworth firm for South Africa. The Conciliation Board of the Tailoring Trade has collapsed, although it had been in existence only a short time, and had settled many trade points without the intervention of an umpire. The dispute referred by the Midland Iron and Steel Wages Board to the arbitration of Sir Thomas Martineau has resulted in the award of a reduction of 3d. per ton in puddlers' wages, with a corresponding decrease in those of the mill and forge men. At Walsall, the Bit, Harness, and Coach-Harness-Furniture Workers, held a meeting, and decided to join the Walsall and Bloxwich Bit Forgers and Filers' Association.

Nottingham and District.—Mr. W. L. Hardstaff reports that the Fancy Lace Trade, which had been brisk during the last few months, has now fallen off again, so that workmen have not been engaged full time. The Leavers branch, however, is much brighter than it has been for some years past; and an advance of 5 per

cent. in wages will take effect on June 1st next. The plain-net and the curtain branches are very quiet; the men are only partially employed, and short time prevails generally. Warp lace is quiet, but improving; a small percentage of men are in receipt of out-of-work pay. The Engineering Industry is slightly improving, with only about 6 per cent. out of work. Machine Building is brisk, and men mostly fully employed. Boxmakers are busy, working full, and in some places, overtime. Boot and Shoemaking is moderate only. The Tramway employés have obtained a reduction in hours from 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ a day. The Bleaching, Dyeing, and Finishing Trades are very slack, one firm having reduced wages by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Hosiery Trade is also very slack, there being very few establishments where the men are making full time. The Printing Trade is quiet; a few men have been displaced by the introduction of the linotype machine. Plasterers, Painters, Bricklayers and Labourers are fairly well employed, there being but very few out of work. Female labour in the Lace Finishing is very busy, and there is also full employment in the Tailoring Trade.

Leicester and District.—Mr. T. Smith reports that the condition of business in the staple trades of the district has been healthy and employment regular. The Boot and Shoe Manufacturers have been working up to their full time, and in some departments overtime has been worked to complete the large orders placed. Great activity has likewise prevailed in and around Northampton in the same industry, all classes of operatives being well employed, and a great demand existing for skilled labour in all branches. The production of cheap rubber-soled boots and shoes has far exceeded the output of previous seasons, and many of the makers have been unable to execute all the orders received. There is a healthy condition of business in the Wool and Spinning Trades, the export department being especially good. In most branches of the Hosiery Trade a firmer tone in operations is reported, with the result that employment is becoming more regular. The Engineering Trades are in general well employed, particularly those firms which make a speciality of boot and shoe machinery. The Building Operatives are working full time, and in the painting branch good workmen are in demand. A decisive majority of the Boot and Shoe Operatives (74 to 9) declared in favour of the application of conciliation and arbitration in settling disputes. This decision has given very great satisfaction to both employers and employed, and restored confidence throughout the trade. The umpire of the Leicester Arbitration Board, in regard to the deductions for "heeling" and "rubbing-down bottoms," has decided in favour of the amounts suggested by the Operatives' Union. The price to be paid to clickers and pressmen working on piecework, and the settlement of the date on which the Northampton employers are to provide their employés with workshops, are still under consideration. Nearly 400 boot and shoe operatives at Anstey have succeeded in reducing their hours from 56 to 54 hours per week. A similar demand at Hinckley, Barwell, and Earl Shilton was, however, referred for settlement to the Board of Arbitration. At Wellingborough the House Painters and Decorators have secured an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per hour. At the time of reporting, the Bricklayers' Labourers at Northampton are out on strike for an increase in wages, while at Leicester the Stonemasons' Labourers are negotiating for an advance, and for an alteration in the working rules.

Eastern Counties.—Mr. J. Robinson reports that little change has taken place during the month in the condition of the Agricultural Labourers, so far as wages and the number of unemployed are concerned. So far as can be estimated, without obtaining the actual figures from all the villages, about 2 per cent. are out of work, as compared with 3 per cent. in March, when the last complete figures were collected. At this season of the year every agricultural labourer should be fully occupied, but the long spell of fine dry weather has hindered work very much. In a few villages wages have increased, and at the present moment the usual time wages of agricultural labourers are from 11s. to 12s. per week. Horsemen on the farms average from 1s. to 2s. more than the labourers, with, in some cases, a free cottage, but they have to work much longer hours than the labourers. During the month there have been several small strikes and lock-outs, which have only been partially successful.

Bristol and South-Western District.—Mr. J. Curle reports that in the Building Trade, masons and painters are very fully employed, and bricklayers, plasterers, and plumbers moderately so; but carpenters and joiners are not so busy. The painters of Bristol seem to have had no difficulty in securing the halfpenny advance, granted on May 1st. The masons at Bath have asked for an advance of 1d. per hour in wages, and for an amended code of working rules.

The Gloucester painters have been agitating for an advance of 1d. per hour, while employers have offered $\frac{1}{4}$ d. now, and $\frac{1}{4}$ d. next year; no agreement appears to have been arrived at as yet. The Boot and Shoe Trade shows a slight decline from last month, but a better state of things is anticipated after Whitsuntide. In the Kingswood district, attempts have been made unsuccessfully to slightly reduce prices upon certain classes of goods. The movement for a uniform statement of wages for this district is at present making very little headway. The Bristol operatives are making strenuous efforts to secure the adoption by the manufacturers of the indoor system of working in the Shoe Trade. Work at all the Collieries is very slack indeed, quite 900 men being unemployed at present in the Bristol district alone. A dispute appears imminent in the surrounding coalfields. In the Forest of Dean the men have been asked to accept a reduction of 20 per cent. in wages. The actual figures of the ballot that was taken on the question by the men have not been published, but it has been stated that quite two-thirds were opposed to accepting the reduction. In Somersetshire, the coal-owners are proposing a reduction of 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in wages, and a giving up of $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. of "bag coal" each for every day the men do not work. The men have been unanimous in refusing these terms, on the recommendations of the executive committee of the Miners' Federation. The dispute which broke out at the East Gloucestershire Quarries on March 25th, for an increase in wages and reduction in the hours of labour, ended on April 25th, in favour of the men. A reduction of 5s. a month has taken place in the wages of Sailors and Firemen, and a strike is announced of 500 dock labourers, in opposition to the introduction of Shipping Federation men. During the past month some clergy and ministers have endeavoured, without avail, to bring about a settlement of the Deal Runners' Lock-out, which has existed since November, 1892. The offer of the men to accept their services as arbitrators in the matter was declined by the Timber Importers' Association. Work still continues slack in the Ironfounding Industry, and to a less extent also in the Engineering, the proportion of unemployed being about 15 per cent. in the former, and 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in the latter case. Trade is also bad with the Saddle and Harness-makers, and the Shipwrights. A slight recovery is taking place in the Cabinet and Furnishing Trades, and the Wholesale and Spoke Garment Makers are reported busy, as well as the Iron and Tin-plate Workers. Business is moderate with the Printing, Brush, and Basket Trades.

Cardiff and District.—Mr. T. Davies reports that, with one exception, all branches of trade are in a worse condition than in March. The Building Trade, however, has been so flourishing that the Carpenters' and Bricklayers' Societies have had to send out of the district for men, while the Plasterers and Plumbers have had no members out of work. The Masons, who came out on strike in May 1892, are still out. Almost unprecedented depression is reported in the Engineering establishments of Cardiff, Newport, and Swansea. Some of the ship-repairing firms have suspended nearly all their workers except apprentices, and a few firms are working short time. A temporary rise is reported in seamen's wages in April. Several firms have induced their Engineers to take the Federation ticket, although the Amalgamated Society of Engineers has drawn out some of its members from their jobs to resist the enforcement of the ticket. The Coal Industry is very slack, owing in some measure, no doubt, to the action of the Boiler-makers in regard to the iron-ore carrying steamers. Four or five collieries—affecting some 1,500 men—have been stopped, and notices to terminate contracts have been given at some others. Early in the month about 500 surface-men, employed at three large collieries near Cardiff, received notices to increase the weekly working hours from 54 to 60. This was unanimously opposed, and for some time the result appeared doubtful. However, the men's representatives met the agents of the collieries, and after a full discussion the notices were eventually withdrawn.

South Wales and Forest of Dean Mining Districts.—In future issues a separate report will appear.

London District.—No arrangements have been made for Local Correspondents in London, but Mr. C. J. Drummond, one of the Labour Correspondents of the Department, reports as follows:—In 42 branches of unions connected with the Engineering Trades, for which returns are forthcoming, and containing 9,276 members, no less than 575 (or 6.2 per cent.) are unemployed, though this number is rather less than for the last two or three months; 34 of these branches report trade "bad," 8 "moderate," and none "good." In the Building Trades, the condition of things is very different. Figures have been obtained from 78 branches of unions connected with these trades, containing 5,530 members, of whom only 105 members, or 1.9 per cent. are unemployed, 40 branches returning trade as "good," 22 "moderate," and 10 "bad." A number