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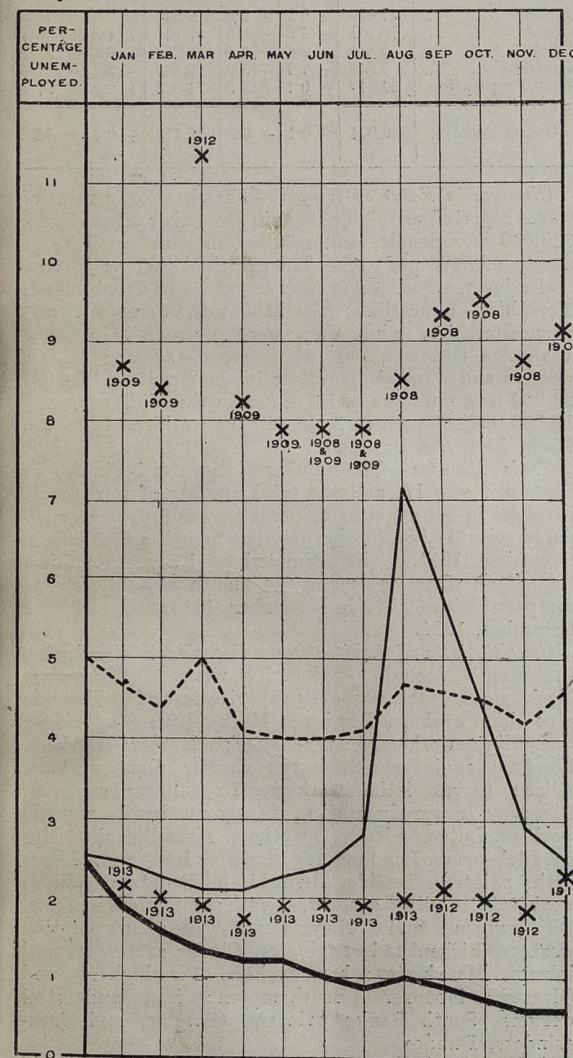
[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

EMPLOYMENT CHART.

SHOWING PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED OF MEMBERS OF
TRADE UNIONS MAKING RETURNS.

— Thick Curve = 1915. — Thin Curve = 1914.
----- Dotted Curve = Mean of 1905-14.

x The crosses indicate the maximum and minimum percentages of unemployed, in the months named, during the years 1905-14.



NOTE TO CHART.

The above Chart is based solely on Returns furnished direct to the Department of Labour Statistics by various Trade Unions which pay unemployed benefit to their members. Persons on strike or locked-out, sick or superannuated, are excluded from the figures.

THE LABOUR MARKET.

In December the high level of employment of recent months was fully maintained, and there was a general shortage of labour except in some branches of the clothing trades.

In the coal mining industry the average weekly number of days on which the collieries were working was the highest recorded by the Department for any December, and the number of workpeople employed was slightly greater than in November. Employment continued good at iron and lead mines; shale mines were very busy. In the quarrying industry employment was generally fair, and at the North Wales slate quarries there was a slight improvement.

In the pig iron industry employment was good, and at iron and steel works very good.

Great scarcity of labour was reported in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, which continued to work at high pressure. With the exception of tinplate, which showed a decline during December, most of the other metal trades continued busy and much overtime was worked.

In the cotton trade the shortage of labour became more acute; in the woollen and hosiery trades employment continued good, and in the worsted trade fairly good. In the jute trade there was a marked shortage of male and female labour; the linen trade showed an improvement, but much short time was still reported in the Belfast district. Employment in the dyeing and bleaching trades was good, but with calico printers it was only moderate. The curtain and plain net branches of the lace trade were well employed, and there was an improvement in the levers branch.

In the boot and shoe trades employment continued very good; in the leather trades it was good on the whole, except with saddle and harness makers. The bespoke tailoring trade, and dressmaking and millinery showed a decline; in the ready-made tailoring, wholesale mantle, costume and blouse trades employment was fair. In the felt hat trade it continued fairly good, and in the silk hat trade it was bad.

In the building trades there was a further seasonal decline, especially with painters. Brick works also showed a seasonal decline, but the cement trade continued well employed. Employment in the furnishing trades was fairly good, and in the woodworking trades good on the whole.

The printing trade showed an improvement, with considerable overtime; in the bookbinding and paper trades employment was good.

The glass and pottery trades continued to be well employed. The food preparation trades were extremely busy and overtime was general. Agricultural operations were hindered by stormy weather, and in consequence the shortage of labour was not so severely felt. Employment with dock labourers was good generally. The supply of seamen for mercantile ships was not quite equal to the demand.

Compared with December, 1914, when employment was already good, a general improvement was shown.

VIENNA IN OCTOBER.

The following Table showing the percentage changes in the retail prices of various articles of food in October as compared with the previous month, with October, 1914, and with July, 1914, are based on returns published by the Austrian Ministries of Commerce and Agriculture in *Warenpreisberichte* :—

Articles.	Increase in Price in October, 1915, as compared with		
	July, 1914.	Oct., 1914.	Sept., 1915.
Beef	211.1	173.4	2.9
Veal	106.7	92.5	No change
Pork	167.5	172.2	8.5
Bacon	310.0	310.0	36.7
Lard	342.1	342.1	44.8
Milk	45.2	50.0	9.8
Butter	100.0	100.0	28.0
Margarine	150.0	140.4	25.0
Flour, wheat	81.4	32.2	No change
Bread, rye	93.8	59.0	No change
Rice	353.3	261.1	18.2
Eggs	155.7	25.0	0.9
Potatoes	37.5*	7.1	31.8*
Split peas	185.7	66.7	No change
Haricot beans	150.0	66.7	No change
Onions	60.0	77.8	28.0
Sugar	8.6	8.0	No change
WEIGHTED NET PERCENTAGE INCREASE	117.2	111.2	10.6

October prices, being compared with those for the preceding month, considerable advances are seen to have taken place in the case of lard, bacon, butter, margarine, rice, eggs and onions. Beef, pork and milk were also somewhat dearer than in September. The only article which fell in price was potatoes. The relative consumption of the various foodstuffs being assumed to be the same in Vienna as in Berlin, it is calculated that on the whole the cost of food was between 10 and 11 per cent. higher in October than in September.

If the figures for October be compared with those for July, 1914, every article (with the exception of potatoes) is found to have increased in cost, the rise varying from nearly 9.0 per cent. for sugar to 342 per cent. for lard. The general level of prices showed an advance of over 117 per cent.

Similarly it is found that food prices in October were on the whole about 111 per cent. higher than in the corresponding month of 1914.

ITALY IN NOVEMBER.

The percentages in the following table showing the increase or decrease in retail food prices in November, as compared with the preceding month and with November, 1914, are based on index numbers published in the issue for 1st January of the journal of the Italian Labour Department (*Bollettino dell'Ufficio del Lavoro*), and relate to 42 towns in Italy.

Article.	Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in November, 1915, as compared with	
	Oct., 1915	Nov., 1914.
Wheat bread	+ 1.7	+ 14.2
Wheat flour	+ 3.2	+ 26.9
Macaroni, etc.	- 0.5	+ 26.2
Beef	No change.	+ 44.8
Bacon	+ 0.8	+ 29.1
Olive oil	+ 1.4	+ 15.8
Milk	+ 1.6	+ 2.4
All Articles together	+ 1.1	+ 22.4

Compared with the corresponding figures for July, 1914, the prices for November show on the whole an advance of 28.6 per cent.

INCREASE IN COST OF FOOD IN NEW ZEALAND, JULY, 1914, TO AUGUST, 1915.

THE following figures, showing the comparative cost of an assumed weekly household consumption of food in New Zealand in August, 1915, as compared with July, 1914, have been extracted from a Return to an Order of the New Zealand House of Representatives, dated 8th September, 1915 :—

* Decrease.

	Assumed weekly family consumption.	Average cost at retail prices prevailing in	
		July, 1914.	August, 1915.
GROCERIES.			
Bread	7 2-lb. loaves	s. d. 2 2½	s. d. 2 10½
Flour	3 lb.	0 4½	0 6½
Oatmeal	1 lb.	0 2	0 3
Rice	1 lb.	0 2½	0 2½
Tea	½ lb.	0 9½	0 9½
Cocoa	½ lb.	0 5½	0 5½
Sugar	3 lb.	0 6	0 7½
Jam	2 lb.	0 11	0 11½
Raisins	¼ lb.	0 2½	0 3
Potatoes	14 lb.	0 9½	1 1½
DAIRY PRODUCE.			
Milk	7 pints	1 2½	1 2½
Butter	3 lb.	3 6½	4 9½
Cheese	¼ lb.	0 2½	0 2½
Bacon	1 lb.	0 11½	0 11½
MEAT.			
Beef—sirloin	3 lb.	1 8½	1 10½
" stewing steak	2 lb.	0 11½	1 0½
" corned roll	1 lb.	0 5½	0 6
" sausages	2 lb.	0 9½	0 9½
Mutton—leg	3 lb.	1 5½	1 6½
" shoulder	2 lb.	0 9½	0 10½
" chops	2 lb.	1 0½	1 1
Total	19 8½	22 11½

Assuming, therefore, that the family dietary was in all respects the same at the two periods compared, its cost would have increased in the interval from 19s. 8½d. to 22s. 11½d., or by 16.5 per cent.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN THE MANUFACTURE OF MUNITIONS IN FRANCE.

A REPORT has now been issued embodying the conclusions of the mission charged with the investigation of labour conditions in the munitions factories of France. The mission consisted of Messrs. J. T. Brownlie, Chairman of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and member of the National Advisory Committee and of the Central Munitions Labour Supply Committee; Alexander Duckham (Ministry of Munitions); D. J. Shackleton, Labour Adviser (Ministry of Munitions); and Allan M. Smith, Secretary of the Engineering Employers' Federation and member of the Central Munitions Labour Supply Committee. The preamble to the report points out that the increase in the output of munitions which has taken place in France is remarkable when it is considered that one-eighth of the country and five-eighths of the former metallurgical productivity is in the hands of the enemy.

The mission visited 23 factories, and it is stated that on the evidence thus gained it is clear that the primary means by which the enhanced output of munitions has been achieved is by increasing intensity of production, by the erection and equipment of new factories and the extension of existing munitions factories, and by the adaptation of existing factories of other kinds to the manufacture of munitions. In connexion with the increased intensity of output it is stated that "women, of whom many thousands are employed in munition factories, work with a good will which is most impressive; this spirit is also evident in the case of male workers. The men have apparently welcomed the introduction of women into the factories, and are doing everything they can to instruct and co-operate with them in increasing the output of munitions."

With regard to the erection of new factories, it is remarkable that this is due entirely to private enterprise, no factories having been subsidised by the Government or loans of any kind made. In such cases the Government has paid, on the equipment of the factory, one-third of the contract price of the contract taken, the remaining two-thirds being paid as the munitions are delivered. The report states that the mission were much impressed with the extent to which the owners of factories have been able to import machinery. Thousands of new machines have been installed, mostly from America, but in many cases also of British or Swiss make. The mission were also much impressed with the lay-out in the new shops, where, owing to the amount of free space and the

mechanical devices for transport, no congestion or difficulty in handling products is met with.

A feature of the French system is the small producer, of whom there are about 1,800 in the Paris district alone. These producers, for reasons of administrative convenience, work under sub-contract; but the work is paid for at the price received by the main contractor, who, therefore, makes no profit. Many such small shops are manned by the various members of a family, and work goes on day and night. An instance is cited where the day shift was superintended by the father and daughters and the night shift by the mother and son. Practically all the factories run night as well as day shift. In some cases three shifts are worked. Where the two-shift system is in force the hours are from between six and seven a.m. to six or seven p.m. There is a long break, averaging one and a half hours, in the middle of the day, and this enables women to look after the meals and comfort of their children at home. On night-shift ten hours are worked, one hour being allowed for a meal, which, however, is usually taken at the machines. The shifts generally change over every fortnight, and on the change the workpeople get 24 hours off. The same hours are worked on Saturdays as on other days, but in some cases no work is done on Sundays after noon, and this allows additional time for carrying out repairs, etc.

In practically all cases women have been introduced since the beginning of the war. They have been drawn from all sorts of occupations. In most cases they work the same hours as the men, but so far they have not been employed much on night shift; this is being modified, however, and in the future women will probably be largely so employed. There is no restriction as to the work which women may do. The only processes so far confined to male labour are setting up and tool-making; with regard to the former, however, women may qualify for some part of it, and with regard to the latter, women are already grinding the edges of cutting tools for machines. A long list of occupations on which women are engaged is given in the Report, and instances of complete manufacture by women include a 75 mm. shell complete, a 120 mm. shell complete, and fuses complete.

The introduction of unskilled labour is stated to have been facilitated by the specialisation in output of each factory; thus one factory will specialise in fuses, another in 75 mm. shells, and so on, according to the varying circumstances of each. It is stated to be the general opinion that on small work the output of female labour equals, and in some cases excels, that of male labour; while in heavier work, within limits, women are of practically the same value as men.

Practically all the work, except tool-room work, setting up, and floor labouring, is done on piecework. The premium bonus system is unknown. In the case of women there is no recognised time rate other than that paid during the period of training, which is usually recognised as a guaranteed minimum rate. The same piecework rates are paid to women as to men.

The period of training for machine operations for women is on the average a week; in some cases, however, it extends to a fortnight, and in others again it is less than a day. There is no Government arrangement for instruction, this work being done separately in each factory. In many cases a man teaches a woman, who then takes his place and teaches another woman, and so on. It is stated that in a few cases men objected to this system at first, but such objections have long ago disappeared.

The Report states that the introduction of unskilled male and female labour has not in France presented the difficulties experienced in this country. Trade Union conditions as regards wages and labour have been practically suspended, and workpeople who show ability are permitted to specialise in the more skilled operations. No strikes have taken place since the beginning of the war, and there have been no applications for general advances in wages. A large proportion of the male labour employed, however, is military, many of

the men being those who have been mobilised but found unfit for active service. Time-keeping is remarkably good, the time lost owing to avoidable causes not exceeding on the average 1 per cent. It is stated that there is no evidence of fatigue due to the long hours worked either by day or night, although the temperature of the shops is usually very high; it is considered that this is largely due to the long break in the middle of the day and to the absence of overtime beyond the usual hours.

The Report concludes by remarking that "it appears to the mission that the increase of production in France is due to one cause, and one only, and that is the patriotic enthusiasm which exists there."

WELFARE SUPERVISION.

THE Health of Munition Workers' Committee, whose duties are "to consider and advise on questions of industrial fatigue, hours of labour, and other matters affecting the personal health and physical efficiency of workers in munitions factories and workshops," have issued a Memorandum* on the subject of Welfare Supervision.

It is stated that varied and complex influences are to-day adversely affecting the efficiency of munition workers, and amongst them certain conditions, outside the ordinary undertakings of factory management, appear to be almost more important than the immediate or technical environment in which work is carried on, or the length of hours during which the workers are employed. Four of the chief influences thus affecting industrial efficiency concern questions of (a) housing, (b) transit, (c) canteen provision, and (d) the individual welfare of the employee. On these four grounds, welfare supervision is now receiving the attention of the more enlightened employers.

In the course of visits to factories the Committee have frequently found various difficulties in existence unknown to, or unappreciated by, the management. In the past these difficulties have not been so great as they are to-day, and hence no one has been given the duty of inquiring into their existence and of devising means to rectify them. Yet without such inquiries, carefully pursued, these adverse conditions cannot be brought to light; and without some person specially appointed or designated for the purpose by the management, there is no one whose duty it is to discover and apply remedies. It is obvious that neither the employer nor the workman is sufficiently disengaged to undertake such obligations.

Welfare Workers already exist at a number of factories, thirty of which sent representatives to a conference held at York in 1913, and the number has largely increased since. Evidence gathered from places where individuals have been appointed to supervise personally the welfare of the factory worker has fully established the value of this kind of supervision, and the Committee are satisfied that the well-being of the workers is being affected, and their output reduced, by the fact that such supervision is largely absent.

The Committee desire to record their unanimous conviction that a suitable system of Welfare Supervision (to be administered by an officer specially appointed for the purpose) is essential in munition works where women or girls are employed, and, they must add, urgently necessary. The officer appointed should be a woman of good standing and education, of experience and sympathy, tactful and sensible in her dealings with others, and having, if not an actual experience, at least a good understanding of industrial conditions. She should live near the factory, and keep in close touch with all the women and girls employed. In "national" factories she should be appointed and paid by the Ministry of Munitions; in "controlled" establishments she should be appointed and paid by the employer, but her appointment should be reported to the Ministry of Munitions. Her duties would be determined by the authority appointing her, but in general the duties of Welfare Supervision should include the following :—

* Cd. 8151. Price 1d.

(1) To be in close touch with the engagement of new labour, or, when desired, to engage the labour.

(2) To keep a register of available houses and lodgings; to inform the management when housing accommodation is inadequate; and to render assistance to workers seeking accommodation.

(3) To ascertain the means of transit used, and the length of time spent in travelling; to indicate the need of increased train, tram, or motor service, or to suggest modification of factory hours to suit existing means of transit.

(4) To advise and assist workers in regard to feeding arrangements; to investigate the need for provision of canteen facilities, or any inadequacy in the provision already made; and to supervise the management of such canteens.

(5) To investigate records of sickness and broken time arising therefrom; and in cases of sickness to visit, where desired, the homes of workers.

(6) To investigate, and advise in, cases of slow and inefficient work, or incapacity, arising from conditions of health, fatigue, or physical strain.

(7) To consider, particularly for delicate and young workers, all questions of sanitation and hygiene affecting health and physical efficiency, and to supervise the conditions of night work, Sunday work, long hours, and overtime.

(8) To advise on means of recreation and educational work.

(9) To investigate complaints and assist in the maintenance of proper discipline and good order.

(10) To keep in touch with responsible organisations having for their object the promotion of the welfare of the worker.

The Committee consider that it is important that some scheme of Welfare Supervision should be adopted for women and girls, however small the number employed, and they suggest that, when it is impracticable to appoint a whole-time woman supervisor, the duties of welfare supervisor should be allotted to a woman on the factory staff specially designated for the purpose. If the employment of women be properly safeguarded and wisely supervised, all may be well; but if not, the ultimate results may be far from desirable or beneficial.

As regards men and boys, the Committee consider that a suitable system of Welfare Supervision (to be administered either by the ordinary factory staff or by an officer specially appointed for the purpose) would be of advantage in munition works where 500 adult males or 100 boys are employed. Welfare Supervision is of particular importance in the case of boys, since their employment presents many features of difficulty, to which special attention must be paid, if health and efficiency are to be safeguarded and discipline maintained. Where a number greatly in excess of 500 men or 100 boys are employed, additional welfare supervising staff may become necessary.

COAL MINING ORGANISATION COMMITTEE.

THE Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the conditions prevailing in the coal mining industry due to the war have presented their Second General Report,* in which they deal with the effect of the war on the industry during the first twelve months of its continuance, and the results achieved by the remedial measures suggested in their First Report.†

The loss of output (about 30,000,000 tons, or 11 per cent.), compared with the previous twelve months, has not been so great as was anticipated, mainly owing, the Committee believe, to the effect of the remedial measures taken to mitigate loss due to depletion of labour. For the first seven months the average rate of decrease exceeded 3,000,000 tons per month (chiefly owing to lessened demand), while for the last five months of the first year of war the rate was about 1,700,000 tons, owing almost entirely to shortage of labour. For the first

three months of the second year of war (August-October, 1915) the output was greater than in the like period of 1914 by 500,000 tons a month, but less than in 1913 by 2,400,000 tons a month. It is remarkable that the falling off has not, of late, been greater, seeing that a steady depletion of mining labour has taken place, due to enlistment in H.M. Forces, and, to some extent, to drawing away of men to the munition works. The average number of persons on the books during the first year of the war was 11.5 per cent. less than in the year before the war; the net loss at August, 1915, was about 16 per cent. These figures may be compared with the reduction in output during the same period, which amounted to about 11 per cent.

Although, as a rule, the pits during the last few months worked more regularly than in the pre-war period, and, since the previous Report, the men have shortened their holidays and, in some cases, relinquished one of their recognised "off" days, the Committee are pleased to be able to state that absenteeism had not increased, but remained the same as during the first seven months of the war, viz., 9.8 per cent. For the like period during the pre-war months the absenteeism was at the rate of 10.5 per cent. The Committee believe that the efforts of the miners' leaders in attempting to secure more regular attendance at work have not been without result, but they again draw attention to the following facts, which are confirmatory of the position indicated in their First Report, viz:—

(1) The absenteeism, taking "face" labour (*i.e.*, coal getters and coal putters) only, is very much higher than the average stated above.

(2) Were there no avoidable absenteeism the output would be increased by from 13 to 14 million tons per annum.

In considering the question of absenteeism and the productive capacity per man employed, it must be borne in mind that the incoming labour, so far as it is not composed of miners' sons or men from other mines, will probably not compare favourably with that of the labour which has enlisted.

The Eight Hours Act.—At a conference held at the Home Office on 2nd September, the workmen's representatives were of opinion that the question of the suspension of the Eight Hours Act should not be considered until it was seen how far the joint efforts of owners and workmen to increase output which were to be made had been successful. The position has not altered since that date.

Disputes and Stoppages at Collieries.—The Committee have drawn attention in the various colliery districts to what is being done towards meeting local disputes and allaying causes of friction, and have urged the desirability of adopting measures with a similar object, namely, to reduce absenteeism and put a stop to friction in those districts in which, so far, little has been done in this direction. A form of Agreement entered into between the owners and the workmen at the mines in Lancashire is reproduced in an Appendix to the Report, and the Committee think that this Agreement might, with advantage, be considered by organisations of masters and men in the other mining districts.

General Reorganisation at the Mines.—The Committee are satisfied that a good deal has been done in concentrating the work of getting coal in the easier places in the mines and in postponing developments and renewals.

Improvement in Railway and Shipping Transport.—Transit facilities are being materially affected by lack of available locomotive power, and this state of affairs will become worse as the movements of troops and munitions increase. The Committee have therefore considered how far relief could be obtained in the direction of reducing the amount of work requiring to be overtaken by the locomotive power likely to be available to deal with the coal traffic. In this connection they have been advised that considerable advantage would be secured by some system of pooling of traders' and railway wagons in different districts. They recommend, therefore, that without delay the Railway Executive be advised to pre-

pare a scheme of pooling suitable to the different districts, and that it be submitted to the coal-owners and others for their consideration in the national interest. The Government might consider, upon the situation thus disclosed, as to the advisability of legislation upon the question.

Lack of tonnage at the South Wales ports has of late operated adversely on the coal trade of that district. The scarcity of tonnage is partly due to British vessels working between foreign ports owing to (1) high freights which can be earned thereby, and (2) less risk of being requisitioned by the Admiralty. The Committee recommend that expert inquiry should take place as to whether it would be possible without prejudice to other interests to a certain extent to compel ships to trade between home and foreign ports.

Disposal of the Coal.—The quantity of coal exported in the twelve months ended July, 1915, was about 46 million tons, a decrease of nearly 30 million tons on the previous twelve months. Bunkers for the use of vessels engaged in the foreign trade accounted for a further 15 million tons, a decrease of 6 million tons. The balance remaining for home use and the Admiralty was 189 million tons, an increase of 5 million tons. The Committee have reason to believe that the demand for coal is now on the whole no less than it was during the pre-war period.

Supply of Pit Timber.—Prices of pitwood have risen to a level likely to affect the industry materially unless some controlling influence is interposed. The Committee propose to conduct further inquiry into the question, and will report thereon at a later stage.

OFFICIAL MEDIATION IN LABOUR DISPUTES IN NORWAY: NEW LAW.*

A LAW, dated 6th August, 1915, which came into force on the 1st January, 1916, creates for the first time in Norway machinery for the settlement of labour disputes by the State. One noteworthy feature of the new measure is that it applies the principle of compulsory investigation and delay before stoppage of work takes place, in which respect it resembles the Canadian Industrial Disputes Act of 1907. Other noteworthy features are the compulsory registration of trade unions and employers' associations, and the recognition and regulation of collective agreements.

With regard to the prevention and settlement of labour disputes two methods of procedure are established. Questions arising out of existing collective agreements must be brought before a specially constituted Labour Court, while those originating in other matters affecting labour are to be submitted to Conciliation Boards to be set up throughout the country.

(a) THE LABOUR COURT.

The Labour Court is to have its seat at Christiania, and is to consist of a president and four other members, all of whom are to be appointed by the Crown. The president must be qualified to act as a judge in the Supreme Court. Two of the four members are to be selected from persons nominated by associations of employers and two from persons nominated by trade unions. The persons nominated must neither be officers nor paid servants of any employers' association or trade union. Members of the Labour Court are to hold office for three years, and to have fixed salaries paid by the State.

Under no circumstances may a strike or lock-out be resorted to for the purpose of determining the validity, the interpretation or the continuation of a collective agreement, or with the object of enforcing demands based upon such an agreement. All controversies of this kind must be referred to the Labour Court for decision, unless the parties agree to settle their differences by private arbitration. The Court cannot, however, be invoked unless negotiations for settlement of the points at issue have previously been set on foot between the parties, or unless an attempt at such negotiations has been made by the party seeking redress. The parties may appear

* Summarised from the text given in *Meddelelseblad*, the organ of the Norwegian Trade Union Central Federation, December, 1915.

before the Court either personally or by accredited representatives.

Except on questions of law, and of the jurisdiction of the Court, its decisions are final. They are, moreover, enforceable in the same way as decisions of the Supreme Court.

(b) CONCILIATION BOARDS.

The procedure for dealing with disputes which do not arise out of collective agreements is to be controlled by a permanent Chief Conciliator, and the whole country is to be divided into conciliation areas, over each of which a District Conciliator is to be appointed. The Chief and the District Conciliators are to be nominated by the Crown, and are to hold office for a term of three years. Each District Conciliator will act as the chairman of a Conciliation Board consisting of himself and two persons to be selected by him from panels of candidates. These panels are to be nominated for each district (in numbers to be fixed subsequently) by registered associations of employers and workpeople.

When warning of a proposed stoppage of work owing to a difference arising out of some point not embodied in a collective agreement has been given by an employer or by workpeople, notice thereof must be at once sent by the party issuing such warning to the Chief Conciliator, or to the District Conciliator concerned. Such stoppage of work must not take place before the time fixed by the notice, and in no case must it take place until four working days have elapsed from the time when the Conciliator has received information that negotiations for settlement have not been entered into, or that they have been broken off, or that the notice as to stoppage of work has been extended to other establishments. Within two days after the receipt of information of a projected strike or lock-out the Conciliator may forbid the stoppage of work if he considers that, having regard to the character or magnitude of the business involved, such stoppage would be detrimental to the public interest. Immediately such prohibition has been imposed, the Conciliator must undertake proceedings with a view to settling the questions at issue. If, on the other hand, the stoppage of work has not been forbidden the Chief Conciliator or the District Conciliator may proceed to attempt to settle the differences, either on his own initiative or at the request of one of the parties. A District Conciliator may act alone, or, if both parties agree, the matter may be heard by the Local Board. If the Chief Conciliator acts as chairman of the local board he will select two assistant Conciliators from the panel of any district.

After ten days have elapsed from the prohibition of the stoppage of work, either of the parties in the dispute may demand that further negotiations shall cease, provided that the party so demanding has duly participated in the negotiations. Four days after this demand has been made negotiations shall terminate. In cases where no settlement has been arrived at, the Conciliator who has conducted the negotiations may publish a statement concerning the matter.

Proceedings both before the Labour Court and the Conciliation Boards are free of cost to the parties.

Infractions of the provisions of the law are punishable by fines, ranging from 5 to 25,000 kronen (5s. 7d. to £1,389).

LABOUR IN THE BRITISH DOMINIONS OVERSEA AND IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

CANADA.*

Employment in November.—Employment in November showed comparatively little change from the high level of October. The conclusion of threshing in a number of Western localities left a number of men out of work, some of whom returned East, while others found employment with lumbering companies, or secured other outside work rendered possible by the fine open weather which prevailed during the greater part of the month.

* *The Labour Gazette*, published by the Canadian Department of Labour, December, 1915.

amounted to 8½ million yards in December, as compared with 10 million yards a month ago, 5½ million yards a year ago, and nearly 9 million yards in December, 1913. Worsteds tissues exported totalled 4½ million yards in December, 1915, about the same quantity as in November, 1915, and December, 1914, but over 2 million yards less than in December, 1913.

PRICES OF WOOL AT BRADFORD.

Prices of wool at Bradford during December, 1915, were higher than during the previous month: Lincoln hoggs increased ½d. per lb., 40's crossbred tops by ¼d. per lb., and 60's super-Botany tops by 3d. per lb. Compared with a year ago the percentage increases were Lincoln hoggs, 38 per cent.; 40's crossbred tops, 32 per cent.; and 60's super-Botany tops, 45 per cent.

	Dec., 1915	Nov., 1915	Dec., 1914.
AVERAGE PRICES:			
Lincoln Hoggs	18½	18½	13½
40's Crossbred tops	25¾	24½	19½
60's Super Botany tops	43	40	27½
COURSE OF PRICES:			
Lincoln Hoggs	18½, 18½	18, 18½	13½
40's Crossbred tops	25½, 26	23½, 25½	20, 19
60's Super Botany tops	42, 44	38, 42	30, 25

LINEN TRADE.

THERE was an improvement in this trade as compared with both a month ago and a year ago.

Returns from firms employing 38,676 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.3 per cent. in the number employed and of 4.8 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago, the number employed declined, but the amount of wages paid increased, by 7.6 per cent.

DEPARTMENTS.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
		Per cent.	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
Preparing	5,143	+ 0.5	- 3.9	3,540	+ 7.1	+ 16.8
Spinning	9,954	+ 1.4	- 3.8	5,674	+ 6.1	+ 11.5
Weaving	12,245	+ 0.1	- 11.5	8,694	+ 3.5	+ 0.3
Other	5,989	- 0.9	- 6.8	5,633	+ 3.1	+ 10.1
Not specified	5,339	- 0.0	- 9.2	3,518	+ 6.5	+ 8.8
TOTAL	38,676	+ 0.3	- 7.6	27,059	+ 4.8	+ 7.6
DISTRICTS.						
Belfast	16,812	+ 1.1	- 6.0	11,473	+ 9.3	+ 7.6
Other places in Ireland	10,176	+ 0.2	- 8.2	6,278	+ 3.3	+ 1.9
TOTAL, IRELAND	26,988	+ 0.8	- 6.8	17,751	+ 7.1	+ 5.5
Fifehire	5,305	- 0.1	- 12.1	3,977	+ 3.1	+ 9.7
Other places in Scotland	5,723	- 1.6	- 7.3	4,827	- 1.3	+ 12.6
TOTAL, SCOTLAND	11,028	- 0.9	- 9.7	8,804	+ 0.6	+ 11.3
England	655	+ 3.3	- 3.1	504	+ 1.6	+ 23.5
UNITED KINGDOM	38,676	+ 0.3	- 7.6	27,059	+ 4.8	+ 7.6

In the Belfast district there was still a good deal of short time working, and the difficulty in obtaining sufficient labour and raw materials continued. Flax roughers and yarn spinners reported employment as good, and flax-dressers as moderate. In other parts of Ireland conditions generally were about the same as in the Belfast district.

At Brechin employment continued good. At Dunfermline the factories were still working five days per week, but the home trade in union and cotton damask goods was reported as good, and in linen damasks as fair; the export trade to America and Canada was stated to be good.

The imports of flax and tow, which come almost entirely from Russia, amounted to 2,419 tons, compared with 5,716 tons a month ago, 4,376 tons in December, 1914, and 7,218 tons in December, 1913.

The exports of linen yarn totalled 522,000 lb. in December, 1915, compared with 658,000 lb. a month ago, 577,000 lb. a year ago, and 1,163,000 lb. in De-

ember, 1913. Exports of linen piece goods amounted to over 9,000,000 yards in December, 1915, compared with nearly 12,500,000 yards a month ago and 12,800,000 yards a year ago. The quantity in December, 1913, was over 19,500,000 yards.

JUTE TRADE.

EMPLOYMENT continued good, and was better than a year ago. The shortage of both male and female labour was very acute.

Returns from firms employing 14,674 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.5 per cent. in the number employed and of 0.7 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago, the number employed increased by 4.2 per cent., and the amount of wages paid by 31.6 per cent. This large increase in wages is mainly due to war bonuses and to increases in rates of pay.

DEPARTMENTS.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
		Per cent.	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
Preparing	3,319	- 0.0	+ 6.0	3,254	+ 1.2	+ 36.4
Spinning	4,003	+ 1.0	+ 2.5	3,668	+ 1.0	+ 35.8
Weaving	5,140	+ 0.5	+ 3.2	5,244	+ 0.6	+ 31.7
Other	2,212	+ 0.4	+ 6.8	2,754	+ 0.1	+ 23.4
TOTAL	14,674	+ 0.5	+ 4.2	14,920	+ 0.7	+ 31.6

In the Dundee district, in which are employed 87 per cent. of the total number of workpeople reported on, employment remained good, though still handicapped by the shortage of labour. Government orders were largely accountable for the activity in the trade. The mills at Arbroath, Forfar and Kirkealdy continued busy.

The imports of jute in December, 1915, totalled just over 50,000 tons, about the same amount as in November, and 15,000 tons more than a year ago. The quantity in December, 1913, was 52,000 tons.

The exports of jute yarns amounted to 2,472,000 lb. in December, 1915, compared with 3,547,000 lb. a month ago, 1,819,000 lb. a year ago, and 3,053,000 lb. in December, 1913.

LACE TRADE.

THE curtain and plain net branches continued well employed during December, and there was a further improvement in the levers branch. Partly owing to the general shortage of labour, there was much less unemployment and short time than a year ago throughout the trade.

Production was adversely affected by the inadequate supply of labour, both male and female, especially in the curtain and plain net sections.

Returns from firms employing 7,968 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.2 per cent. in the number employed and of 0.6 per cent. in the amount of wages paid, compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was an increase of 2.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 38.1 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

BRANCHES.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
		Per cent.	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
Levers	1,817	+ 2.7	- 1.1	2,109	+ 2.6	+ 52.6
Curtain	2,400	- 0.7	+ 2.2	2,719	- 1.7	+ 2.1
Plain Net	2,881	+ 0.3	+ 6.0	2,853	+ 1.6	+ 6.1
Others	870	- 2.7	- 3.5	728	- 0.5	+ 10.1
TOTAL	7,968	+ 0.2	+ 2.1	8,409	+ 0.6	+ 38.1
DISTRICTS.						
Nottingham City	2,814	- 0.0	+ 1.4	2,709	+ 0.4	+ 32.5
Long Eaton and other outlying districts	837	+ 1.3	- 4.6	1,163	+ 0.6	+ 50.1
Other English Districts	2,593	+ 0.5	+ 5.1	2,668	+ 2.2	+ 61.8
Scotland	1,724	- 0.3	+ 2.3	1,869	- 1.4	+ 15.4
TOTAL	7,968	+ 0.2	+ 2.1	8,409	+ 0.6	+ 38.1

At Nottingham the curtain and plain net branches continued well employed; in the levers branch there was still much short time, but owing to the shortage of labour unemployment was less than a year ago.

At Long Eaton employment was good, and better than a month ago or a year ago; some overtime was reported, whereas in December, 1914, 70 per cent. of the operatives were on short time. In the West of England employment was fairly good, and much above the level of a year ago. In Scotland employment in the curtain branch was not quite so good as in November, but considerably better than in December, 1914.

The value of the imports of cotton lace during December was £51,000, a decline of £44,000 on a month ago, of £19,000 on a year ago, and less than one-quarter the value of the imports in December, 1913.

The exports (British and Irish) were valued at £235,000, a decrease of £35,000 on a month ago, but an increase of £70,000 on a year ago. The value in December, 1913, was £370,000.

SILK TRADE.

In this trade employment was fairly good, and slightly better than a month ago; it was considerably better than in December, 1914.

During the month output was affected by the shortage of male and female labour; this was especially marked in the Lancashire and West Riding district, where the supply of spinners and dressers, in particular, was not equal to the demand.

Returns from firms employing 9,642 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed and an increase of 1.5 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 3.7 per cent. in the number employed and an increase of 10.9 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

BRANCHES.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
		Per cent.	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
Throwing	1,197	+ 0.4	+ 2.2	628	+ 3.1	+ 19.4
Spinning	2,543	+ 0.3	- 9.4	2,386	+ 2.3	+ 6.9
Weaving	3,433	- 0.8	- 3.2	2,728	- 0.5	+ 13.1
Other	1,781	+ 1.1	+ 2.1	1,512	+ 0.5	+ 10.3
Not specified	718	- 1.5	- 7.2	705	+ 5.7	+ 11.2
TOTAL	9,642	- 0.1	- 3.7	7,959	+ 1.5	+ 10.9
DISTRICTS.						
Lancashire and W. Riding of Yorkshire	2,571	- 0.3	- 9.5	2,492	+ 1.8	+ 3.7
Macclesfield, Congleton and District	2,295	- 1.3	+ 0.7	1,929	- 0.2	+ 9.1
Eastern Counties	2,554	+ 0.3	- 2.0	2,034	+ 1.4	+ 16.0
Other Districts, including Scotland	2,222	+ 1.8	- 2.9	1,504	+ 3.4	+ 20.3
TOTAL	9,642	- 0.1	- 3.7	7,959	+ 1.5	+ 10.9

At Macclesfield, Leek and Congleton employment was good in all the principal branches, except with handloom weavers at Macclesfield, with whom it was fair; it was better than a year ago.

In the Eastern Counties employment showed a further slight improvement compared with a month ago; it was reported as good at Halstead, Braintree and Norwich, and as fair at Yarmouth and Sudbury. In the West Riding employment was about the same as a month ago; the decline in numbers as compared with a year ago was chiefly in the spinning department. At Coventry artificial silk workers and ribbon makers reported employment as fairly good.

The imports of raw silk amounted to 82,000 lb. compared with 74,000 lb. a month ago, and 144,000 lb. a year ago. In December, 1913, the total was 79,000 lb. Silk yarns and manufactures imported were valued at

* The comparison of wages with a year ago is somewhat affected by war bonuses and increases in rates of wages.

£987,000, compared with £1,151,000 in November, £890,000 a year ago, and £1,206,000 in December, 1913.

The exports (British and Irish) of silk yarns and manufactures were valued at £146,000, a decrease of £35,000 on a month ago, but an increase of £29,000 on a year ago. The value in December, 1913, was £181,000.

HOSIERY TRADE.

PRODUCTION was affected by the shortage of male and female labour, but employment on the whole continued good, and was better than a year ago; the increase shown in earnings as compared with December, 1914, is partly due to war bonuses.

Returns from firms employing 23,417 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed and a decrease of 1.3 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was an increase of 4.2 per cent. in the number employed and of 12.8 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.*

District.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.*
		Per cent.	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
Leicester	12,591	+ 0.2	+ 4.6	12,261	- 2.1	+ 13.4
Leicester Country District ..	2,079	+ 0.5	+ 2.5	1,791	- 1.3	+ 14.7
Notts and Derbyshire	5,066	- 0.4	+ 1.5	4,415	- 0.1	+ 14.9
Scotland	2,783	- 0.1	+ 4.5	2,462	+ 0.3	+ 3.2
Other Districts	898	+ 1.6	+ 19.4	708	-	+ 20.2
TOTAL, UNITED KINGDOM	23,417	+ 0.1	+ 4.2	21,637	- 1.3	+ 12.8

At Leicester employment remained good generally, but owing to the difficulty in getting sufficient labour some machines were idle and it was reported that any further depletion of male labour would seriously curtail production. At Loughborough employment continued good in most departments.

In the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire district employment with power-frame workers continued good and was much better than a year ago; in the Nottingham district about 25 per cent. of the operatives worked overtime to the extent of 8 to 10 hours per week during the month. With hand-frame workers in the country districts a good deal of short time was reported, but there was a slight improvement compared with a month ago.

In Scotland employment continued good.

CARPET TRADE.

THERE was some improvement in this trade compared with a month ago, and employment on the whole was decidedly better than in December, 1914.

Several firms reported a shortage of labour, especially of male and female weavers.

Returns from firms employing 6,671 workpeople and paying £6,389 in wages in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.2 per cent. in the number employed and of 2.8 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 4.5 per cent. in the number employed, and an increase of 10.3 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

In the Kidderminster district employment, although still hampered by difficulties with regard to labour and supplies, showed some improvement, and was decidedly better than a year ago, when most of the operatives were on half-time. In the West Riding some carpet firms have turned their attention to making blankets for some time past, and these were well employed, and in some cases even working overtime; there was also some little improvement in the regular carpet trade in this district. In Scotland employment continued good.

* The comparison of wages with a year ago is affected by war bonuses.

BLEACHING, PRINTING, DYEING AND FINISHING.

EMPLOYMENT was good, except in the printing section, and much above the level of a year ago.

The supply of male labour was not equal to the demand, and there was also some scarcity of women workers. In several cases a serious shortage is anticipated when the groups are called up. The restricted supplies of raw materials were still the subject of general complaint.

Returns from firms employing 25,361 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease of 0.9 per cent. in the number employed and an increase of 1.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was an increase of 3.8 per cent. in the number employed, and of 30.9 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

	Workpeople.				Earnings.			
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Per cent.	Per cent.
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.*		
TRADES:								
Bleaching	2,933	+ 1.0	- 2.9	5,594	+ 9.7	+ 23.7		
Printing	745	+ 1.8	+ 0.4	1,137	+ 1.7	+ 37.3		
Dyeing	12,877	- 2.7	+ 5.0	22,767	- 1.1	+ 34.5		
Trimming, Finishing and other Departments	7,748	+ 1.1	+ 4.0	10,194	+ 3.9	+ 24.4		
Not specified	1,058	+ 1.0	+ 12.2	1,691	+ 0.1	+ 36.3		
TOTAL	25,361	- 0.9	+ 3.8	39,383	+ 1.2	+ 30.9		
DISTRICTS:								
Yorkshire	12,277	- 2.9	+ 5.7	22,037	- 1.4	+ 34.5		
Lancashire	7,887	+ 1.1	+ 4.9	10,942	+ 6.4	+ 33.0		
Scotland	1,943	+ 1.4	- 6.1	2,222	+ 2.7	+ 13.9		
Ireland	785	- 0.8	- 10.6	657	+ 0.3	- 6.7		
Other Districts	2,489	+ 1.4	+ 5.3	3,525	+ 2.1	+ 24.6		
TOTAL	25,361	- 0.9	+ 3.8	39,383	+ 1.2	+ 30.9		

Bleaching.—Employment with cotton bleachers in Lancashire was good, and better than a month ago and a year ago. At Basford and Bulwell some overtime was reported, and employment was much better than a year ago. In the Dundee district bleachfield workers continued fairly well employed.

Printing.—With machine calico printers in England employment was moderate; with engravers it was on the whole bad, short time being general. In Scotland employment was fair with machine printers, and dull with engravers.

Dyeing.—Employment with woollen and worsted dyers continued good, and was much better than in December, 1914, and 85 per cent. of the operatives worked overtime; there was a considerable shortage of labour and the machinery was not fully employed. With cotton dyers employment was also good. At Macclesfield, Leek, and Congleton silk dyers reported employment as good. Hosiery dyers at Nottingham, Basford and Bulwell continued well employed.

Trimming, Finishing &c.—At Leicester, Hinckley and Loughborough employment with hosiery trimmers, &c., continued good; at Hinckley overtime was worked, owing to the shortage of men. At Basford employment was good, but some of the operatives were waiting for material, owing to a shortage of labour on preparatory stages of hosiery trimming. At Dundee calendar workers continued well employed.

BOOT AND SHOE TRADE.

In all the principal districts, with few exceptions, employment continued very good, and on the whole showed little change compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decline in the numbers employed, owing to enlistments, except in four districts, viz., Kettering, Bristol, Kingswood and Manchester. The increase in earnings compared with December, 1914, is largely due to war bonuses.

The outstanding feature was still the labour problem: output was generally affected by the scarcity of labour, while in some centres it was reported that there was

* The comparison of wages with a year ago is affected by war bonuses and increases in rates of wages.

great difficulty in keeping up production even on Government work.

Returns from firms employing 62,174 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 0.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 2.9 per cent. in the number employed and an increase of 7.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

District.	Workpeople.				Earnings.			
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Per cent.	Per cent.
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.*		
ENGLAND & WALES.								
London	1,950	- 0.5	- 3.8	2,725	+ 0.3	+ 16.1		
Leicester	11,697	+ 0.8	- 1.0	16,200	+ 0.1	+ 11.7		
Leicester Country District	2,778	- 0.8	- 6.9	3,561	+ 0.5	+ 13.6		
Northampton	10,127	- 0.3	- 4.1	13,072	- 0.6	+ 3.4		
Northampton Country District	8,180	- 0.4	- 6.2	10,148	+ 0.0	+ 1.6		
Kettering	4,221	+ 0.6	+ 2.4	5,271	- 0.3	+ 9.0		
Stafford & District ..	2,573	- 0.3	- 3.7	3,113	- 1.3	+ 6.0		
Norwich & District ..	3,938	+ 0.8	- 4.3	4,294	+ 4.2	+ 9.7		
Bristol & District ..	2,520	+ 0.0	+ 3.5	3,006	- 0.2	+ 16.8		
Kingswood	1,627	- 0.5	+ 7.7	1,892	+ 3.0	+ 1.6		
Leeds & District	2,289	+ 0.4	- 6.9	2,760	+ 2.2	- 0.6		
Manchester & District ..	3,547	+ 0.5	+ 4.8	4,114	- 0.0	+ 16.5		
Birmingham & District ..	11,303	- 2.0	- 3.1	1,197	- 11.3			
Other parts of England and Wales	1,916	+ 0.8	- 4.0	1,935	+ 1.0	+ 1.4		
ENGLAND & WALES ..	58,516	+ 0.0	- 2.4	73,288	+ 0.1	+ 7.6		
SCOTLAND	3,108	+ 0.4	- 11.6	4,010	+ 1.4	- 0.6		
IRELAND	550	+ 1.3	- 1.3	478	+ 2.1	+ 10.4		
UNITED KINGDOM ..	62,174	+ 0.1	- 2.9	77,776	+ 0.2	+ 7.2		

LEATHER TRADES.

APART from the saddle and harness trades employment continued good on the whole, with overtime in places and some shortage of labour. At Leeds it is stated that factories were busy on classes of leather formerly obtained from the Continent for ladies' handbags, &c., and at Birmingham fancy leather workers were fairly well employed on Christmas orders. Some decline was reported, however, by curriers, who were slack in London and Edinburgh, while at Birmingham a considerable amount of short time was reported.

In the saddle and harness trades employment was quiet and worse than a month ago, except as regards London, where it was described as good.

Trade Unions with 4,045 members, exclusive of those serving with the colours, reported 4.7 per cent. as unemployed at the end of December, compared with 3.5 per cent. at the end of November and 2.4 per cent. a year ago. Most of the workpeople returned as out of employment in December were saddlers at Walsall, of whom none were so returned a year ago.

The imports of raw hides amounted to 55,000 cwts. in December, 1915, as compared with 80,000 cwts. in the previous month, 120,000 cwts. in December, 1914, and 106,000 cwts. in December, 1913.

The exports (British and Irish) of leather in December, 1915, amounted to 14,000 cwts., about the same as in November, but an increase of 10,000 cwts. on a year ago. Exports of leather manufactures were valued at £120,000, compared with £233,000 a month ago, £124,000 a year ago, and £181,000 in December, 1913.

HAT TRADE.

Silk.—Employment continued bad in London and in the provincial centres, and short time was still general. Compared with December, 1914, there was a slight improvement.

Felt.—Employment in this branch continued fairly good; largely owing to enlistments there was less unemployment than a year ago. The percentage of trade

* The comparison of wages with a year ago is affected by war bonuses.

union members unemployed at the end of December was 0.3, compared with 0.1 a month ago and 7.0 a year ago. At Denton employment was reported as fairly good, and much better than in December, 1914, when 95 per cent. of the workpeople were on short time; in Warwickshire it was fair, with short time in some departments; at Stockport 25 per cent. of the operatives were working short time, but employment was better than a year ago, when 68 per cent. were similarly affected.

TAILORING TRADE.**BESPOKE.**

London.—During December employment was very slack, and worse than a month ago and a year ago. Returns from firms paying £9,403 in wages to their workpeople (indoor and outdoor workers) during the four weeks ended 18th December, showed a decrease of 7.1 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago and of 9.5 per cent. compared with a year ago.

Other Centres.—Employment showed a general seasonal slackness: it was reported as quiet, with short time, at Liverpool and Belfast, and as very slack at Glasgow; on the whole, there was little change compared with December, 1914.

READY-MADE.

In this branch employment continued fair, but there was much less pressure than a year ago, owing to the less widespread execution of Government contracts.

The supply of male cutters, women machinists, and juvenile labour, was not in all cases equal to the demand, but the general slackening of employment has somewhat relieved this aspect of the situation.

Returns from firms employing 36,137 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease of 1.7 per cent. in the number employed, and a decrease of 0.4 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 2.0 per cent. in the number employed and of 7.0 per cent. in the amount of wages paid. About 19 per cent. of the workpeople covered by the returns were on short time during the month, while about 10 per cent. were on overtime, whereas a year ago 49 per cent. were working more than the usual hours.

District.	Indoor Workpeople.					
	Number.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
	Month ago.	Year ago.	Month ago.	Year ago.	Month ago.	Year ago.*
Leeds	9,584	- 1.1	- 3.3	8,127	- 0.7	- 14.6
Manchester	3,527	- 3.9	- 6.6	3,681	- 1.3	12.4
Other places in Yorkshire, Lancs. & Cheshire	4,920	- 0.4	- 3.3	4,285	+ 3.6	- 5.4
Bristol	2,052	- 3.1	- 3.0	1,453	- 5.7	- 11.3
North and West Midland Counties (excluding Bristol)	3,719	- 3.1	- 9.6	2,750	- 2.5	- 14.8
South Midland & Eastern Counties	3,235	- 2.6	+ 2.5	2,491	- 1.9	- 11.5
London	4,009	+ 2.6	+ 28.7	4,640	+ 5.3	+ 33.3
Glasgow	1,809	- 12.3	- 21.5	1,625	- 11.4	- 17.8
Rest of United Kingdom	3,232	+ 0.1	- 0.0	2,433	- 1.1	- 1.1
TOTAL, UNITED KINGDOM	36,137	- 1.7	- 2.0	31,495	- 0.4	- 7.0

The total amount of wages paid to outworkers by the above firms showed a decrease of 12 per cent. compared with a month ago, and of 61 per cent. compared with a year ago.

At Leeds employment showed a further slight decline, and was not up to the level of a year ago. During the month about 23 per cent. of the operatives worked short time, and about 12 per cent. were on overtime, whereas a year ago about 37 per cent. worked overtime, and there was practically no short time. The Jewish operatives reported employment as quiet owing to a falling-off in the "specials" trade.

At Manchester employment was not so good as a month ago or a year ago, although still fair; there was a large diminution in the amount of overtime worked,

13 per cent. of the workers being thus concerned during the current month, as compared with 60 per cent. a year ago. At Hebden Bridge employment continued good, at Huddersfield, Liverpool and Wigan it was moderate.

At Bristol and Stroud employment was fair, but not so good as a month ago or a year ago. At Walsall, Tamworth and Plymouth employment was reported as good, at Colchester it was moderate; at Norwich no overtime was worked, and there was a decline since last month owing to the completion of Government contracts.

At Glasgow employment was moderate and considerably below the level of a year ago, when the majority of the firms were busy on military work.

In London employment was fairly good, and slightly better than a month ago. Compared with December, 1914, the increase shown in the total earnings of indoor workers was counterbalanced by the decrease in the amount paid to outworkers—the net result being a decline of about 30 per cent.

SHIRT AND COLLAR TRADE.

In this trade employment continued fair, and was better than in December, 1914. A shortage of women machinists and men cutters was again reported, especially in the London and Manchester districts.

District.	Workpeople.				Earnings.			
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Per cent.	Per cent.
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.		
London	4,130	+ 1.1	- 0.0	3,442	- 1.1	+ 11.8		
Manchester	3,159	- 0.9	- 2.4	2,583	- 2.7	- 4.0		
Rest of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire.	1,852	+ 0.4	+ 5.6	1,263	+ 3.4	+ 12.4		
S.W. Counties	2,635	- 0.6	+ 0.8	1,737	+ 1.6	+ 19.5		
Rest of England and Wales	1,499	+ 0.6	- 2.9	1,103	+ 1.9	+ 8.5		
Glasgow	2,543	+ 0.1	- 6.3	1,686	- 1.4	- 0.8		
Londonderry	2,002	- 0.3	- 3.8	1,225	+ 5.2	+ 20.9		
Belfast	1,433	+ 1.1	+ 8.6	1,027	+ 0.7	+ 28.4		
Rest of Ireland	964	- 1.0	+ 6.6	530	+ 4.3	+ 17.8		
TOTAL, UNITED KINGDOM	20,217	+ 0.1	- 0.4	14,616	+ 1.2	+ 9.5		

Returns from firms employing 20,217 workpeople, in the week ended 18th December, showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 1.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 0.4 per cent. in the number employed and an increase of 9.5 per cent. in the amount of wages paid. About 10 per cent. of the operatives were on short time during the month, the majority of these being in the South-Western counties and in Londonderry.

In London employment continued fair and was much better than a year ago. In Manchester there was a slight decline compared with a month ago, and employment was not up to the level of a year ago, although still fairly good. In the South-Western Counties about 21 per cent. of the operatives were on short time during December, but employment was much better than a year ago; in the collar and cuff factories employment was reported as fair at Bideford, good at Barnstaple, and fairly good at Exeter. At Glasgow employment continued fair.

In Londonderry employment was moderate, 42 per cent. of the workers being on short time; in Belfast and the rest of Ireland employment, on the whole, was fair: in Ireland generally employment was much better than a year ago.

OTHER CLOTHING TRADES.**DRESSMAKING AND MILLINERY.**

In London employment with dressmakers in retail firms was moderate, and not so good as a month ago; compared with a year ago the numbers employed were fewer, but less short time was reported, 16 per cent. of the workers being thus affected during the current month as compared with 57 per cent. in December, 1914. Returns from firms, chiefly in the West End, employing

1,824 dressmakers in the week ended 18th December, showed a decrease of 5.2 per cent. in the number employed compared with a month ago, and of 3.5 per cent. compared with a year ago. A scarcity of learners and apprentices was reported.

With court and private dressmakers employment was very slack; the numbers employed showed a decline of 5.5 per cent. compared with a month ago, and of 4.8 per cent. compared with a year ago; the workers were, however, more fully employed than in December, 1914, only 23 per cent. being on short time, as compared with 73 per cent. a year ago.

With milliners in the West End employment was moderate, and worse than a month ago and a year ago.

MANTLE, COSTUME, BLOUSE, ETC., TRADES.

In the wholesale mantle, costume, blouse, underclothing, and millinery trades returns from firms in London employing 5,356 workpeople on their premises (in addition to outworkers) in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease of 0.2 per cent. in the number employed compared with a month ago, and an increase of 2.6 per cent. compared with a year ago. There was some seasonal slackness, especially in the millinery branch, but employment on the whole was fair; about 9 per cent. of the workers were on short time, partly on account of early closing through lighting restrictions. A shortage of machinists and of juvenile labour was reported.

At Manchester returns from firms employing 5,287 workpeople in the week ended 18th December in the costume, blouse, mantle, etc., trades showed a decrease of 0.7 per cent. in the number employed, compared with a month ago, and an increase of 4.3 per cent. compared with a year ago. About 8 per cent. of the workers were on short time during the month, and about 9 per cent. were on overtime; employment during the month was fairly good, and a shortage of female labour was reported, especially of machinists, partly due to the fact that the women are taking up munition or other work.

At Glasgow employment was fair, not so good as a month ago, but better than in December, 1914. Returns from firms employing 2,228 workpeople in the mantle, costume and underclothing trades showed a decrease of 2.1 per cent. in the number employed compared with a month ago, and an increase of 3.2 per cent. compared with a year ago. There was a slight scarcity of machinists.

CORSET TRADE.

Employment continued good at all the principal centres, and was better than a year ago. Returns from firms (mainly in England) employing 6,157 workpeople in their factories (in addition to outworkers) in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed compared with a month ago, and of 11.7 per cent. compared with a year ago. The supply of machinists was not equal to the demand.

BRICK AND CEMENT TRADES.
BRICK TRADE.

THE condition of the brick-making industry was still quiet, and showed a further seasonal decline compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago, there was a great reduction in the number employed, owing principally to enlistments and the requirements of munition and other Government work. For the workpeople remaining in the industry employment, though considerably better than a year ago, showed a decline as compared with the previous month. There was again a shortage of practically all kinds of male labour, including boys, and in some cases works had to be wholly or partially closed in consequence. A considerable amount of time was lost during the month, owing largely to unfavourable weather. Returns from firms employing 7,380 workpeople in the week ended 18th December, 1915, showed a decrease of 2.0 per cent. in the number employed and of 6.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a

year ago, there was a decrease of 25.4 per cent. in the number employed and of 12.6 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

Districts.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
Northern Counties, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire	2,836	- 1%	- 16.6	£ 4,142	- 6.5	- 4.6
Midlands and Eastern Counties	2,191	- 2.4	- 30.4	2,580	- 5.1	- 16.7
S. and S.W. Counties and Wales	1,585	- 2.6	- 31.3	2,107	- 10.5	- 22.1
Scotland	538	- 0.6	- 21.8	792	+ 3.7	- 2.7
Other Districts	320	- 1.2	- 32.9	391	- 3.9	- 22.0
TOTAL	7,380	- 2.0	- 25.4	10,012	- 6.2	- 12.6

Employment continued moderate in the Tees and Hartlepoons district. In the Bradford district many works were closed, and employment continued bad. There was a slight decline in the Nottingham district. At Stourbridge employment continued very good, and was better than a year ago, when three-quarter time was being worked. In the encaustic tile trade at Tamworth employment was again good, and better than a year ago, whilst in the Shropshire glazed brick and pipe trade it continued moderate. Employment in the Birmingham district again showed little change on the previous month. In the Eastern Counties it was slack generally, and worse than both a month ago and a year ago. Employment in the Plymouth district was very dull, and a number of works were closed. It was slack at Bridgewater, and, except where affected by Government work, employment was slack generally in North Wales.

CEMENT TRADES.

Employment continued very good for the workers remaining in the industry. The shortage of labour continued general, and much overtime was worked.

Returns from firms employing 7,543 workpeople in the week ended 18th December, 1915, showed a decrease of 1.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 3.4 per cent. in the amount of wages paid compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago, the number employed decreased by 15.0 per cent., but the amount of wages paid declined by only 1.6 per cent.

The exports (British and Irish) of cement amounted to 23,700 tons, compared with 15,700 tons a month ago, 42,500 tons a year ago, and 48,800 tons in December, 1913.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF WORKS.

EMPLOYMENT on private building work was quiet in December, and showed a further seasonal decline, especially affecting painters. With masons and plasterers employment was slack. In other occupations, however, men were well employed, partly on building work in connection with the war, many men having enlisted or joined other trades. The general percentage unemployed was 2.4 compared with 5.0 a year ago, while in the case of plumbers, navvies and labourers the percentage was 1.0 or less.

The following Table shows the percentage unemployed among 692,083 workpeople insured against unemployment under Part II. of the National Insurance Act at the end of December, 1915:—

Occupations.	Number Insured at end of December, 1915.	Percentage Unemployed at end of December.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
			Month ago.	Year ago.
Carpenters	107,951	1.5	+ 0.3	- 0.1
Bricklayers	58,780	2.1	- 0.1	- 4.0
Masons	34,398	3.2	+ 0.1	- 3.6
Plasterers	17,389	5.6	+ 0.7	- 4.3
Painters	108,872	7.9	+ 3.1	- 5.2
Plumbers	30,162	0.7	..	- 1.5
Other skilled occupations ..	31,028	1.0	..	- 1.9
Navvies	87,861	0.5	- 0.1	- 1.7
Labourers	217,642	1.0	..	- 2.6
ALL OCCUPATIONS ..	692,083	2.4	+ 0.5	- 2.6

The next Table shows in detail the percentage unemployed in the above occupations in each division. The highest percentage for all occupations taken together was in Ireland (9.0), which also shows the greatest increase compared with a month ago and the slightest decrease compared with a year ago. Except in London (where no change was shown) there was an increase in the percentage unemployed in every district as compared with a month ago. Taking the occupations separately, a general increase in the percentage unemployed was shown by painters and carpenters, other occupations showing little general change. Compared with a year ago, there were (except in Ireland) reductions in the percentages unemployed in every district in practically every occupation. The improvement was least marked in the case of carpenters, owing to the fact that in December, 1914, this trade was busy upon the erection of huts for the troops and upon other Government work.

Districts.	Number Insured.	Per-cent- age Un-emp- ply'd.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Number Insured.	Per-cent- age Un-emp- ply'd.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
			M'nth ago.	Year ago.			M'nth ago.	Year ago.
Carpenters.								
London	19,540	2.0	+ 0.1	+ 0.1	9,957	5.5	- 0.4	- 4.9
Northern Counties	5,003	0.5	+ 0.3	- 1.1	2,889	0.2	..	- 3.5
North-Western ..	11,226	1.5	+ 0.1	- 1.0	6,219	0.8	- 0.7	- 6.9
Yorkshire	9,093	0.9	+ 0.4	- 0.6	4,980	0.5	- 0.1	- 4.5
East Midlands ..	5,171	0.9	+ 0.3	- 0.1	4,080	0.6	+ 0.1	- 5.0
West Midlands ..	7,514	0.9	+ 0.3	- 0.3	6,699	0.4	..	- 2.9
Eastern & S.E. Count.	15,695	1.2	+ 0.5	+ 0.2	11,287	2.5	+ 0.5	- 3.0
South-Western ..	14,020	1.1	+ 0.1	..	5,890	2.2	+ 0.6	- 1.8
Wales	5,153	1.2	+ 0.3	- 0.3	1,670	0.8	+ 0.1	- 2.1
Scotland	10,321	0.6	+ 0.2	- 0.7	1,658	0.1	- 0.7	- 3.8
Ireland	5,215	7.6	+ 2.2	+ 4.6	1,451	7.0	- 1.9	- 4.8
Bricklayers.								
London	1,823	0.6	+ 0.8	- 2.7	4,034	10.3	+ 0.8	- 5.6
Northern Counties	2,787	4.8	- 1.8	- 4.9	731	1.6	- 0.3	- 7.4
North-Western ..	4,125	0.9	- 0.3	- 6.0	1,322	1.9	- 0.1	- 4.7
Yorkshire	866	2.5	+ 0.5	- 3.3	420	3.8	+ 1.4	- 6.0
East Midlands ..	851	1.1	- 0.2	- 4.0	904	2.8	+ 0.3	- 4.0
West Midlands ..	1,030	4.9	+ 0.9	- 4.1	1,574	6.6	+ 0.9	- 5.5
Eastern & S.E. Count.	7,554	2.6	+ 0.3	- 2.2	1,973	3.9	- 0.2	- 3.7
South-Western ..	4,627	1.2	+ 0.1	- 1.9	1,454	2.1	+ 0.6	- 1.7
Wales	6,425	2.5	- 1.1	- 6.3	1,978	2.0	+ 0.2	- 6.0
Scotland	2,072	14.5	+ 4.5	+ 0.4	1,245	13.7	+ 6.4	+ 2.2
Ireland								
Masons.								
London	2,138	5.2	+ 0.8	- 2.7	4,034	10.3	+ 0.8	- 5.6
Northern Counties	2,787	4.8	- 1.8	- 4.9	731	1.6	- 0.3	- 7.4
North-Western ..	4,125	0.9	- 0.3	- 6.0	1,322	1.9	- 0.1	- 4.7
Yorkshire	866	2.5	+ 0.5	- 3.3	420	3.8	+ 1.4	- 6.0
East Midlands ..	851	1.1	- 0.2	- 4.0	904	2.8	+ 0.3	- 4.0
West Midlands ..	1,030	4.9	+ 0.9	- 4.1	1,574	6.6	+ 0.9	- 5.5
Eastern & S.E. Count.	7,554	2.6	+ 0.3	- 2.2	1,973	3.9	- 0.2	- 3.7
South-Western ..	4,627	1.2	+ 0.1	- 1.9	1,454	2.1	+ 0.6	- 1.7
Wales	6,425	2.5	- 1.1	- 6.3	1,978	2.0	+ 0.2	- 6.0
Scotland	2,072	14.5	+ 4.5	+ 0.4	1,245	13.7	+ 6.4	+ 2.2
Ireland								
Plasterers.								
London	32,503	6.9	+ 0.1	- 6.5	5,992	1.5	- 0.2	- 2.2
Northern Counties	3,148	5.1	+ 4.4	- 8.3	1,474	0.1	+ 0.1	- 0.3
North-Western ..	11,003	17.7	+ 10.4	- 3.9	3,902	0.6	..	- 1.4
Yorkshire	7,383	9.2	+ 6.9	- 7.1	2,752	0.4	+ 0.3	- 1.1
East Midlands ..	3,828	7.8	+ 5.5	- 6.7	1,132	0.3	- 0.1	- 3.3
West Midlands ..	7,375	3.0	+ 1.8	- 6.1	1,952	0.2	+ 0.1	- 1.8
Eastern & S.E. Count.	16,100	5.5	+ 2.3	- 4.0	3,020	0.7	- 0.1	- 0.9
South-Western ..	12,245	4.9	+ 1.6	- 3.9	3,128	0.4	..	- 1.1
Wales	3,111	3.9	+ 1.6	- 2.3	660	0.5	..	- 1.4
Scotland	7,994	4.5	+ 0.9	- 4.6	5,057	0.1	..	- 0.8
Ireland	3,684	27.7	+ 13.2	+ 2.9	1,093	4.0	+ 0.8	- 1.6
Painters.								
London	2,065	2.1	+ 0.1	- 4.0	8,517	1.4	- 0.3	- 3.2
Northern Counties	3,597	0.8	- 0.5	- 1.9	6,074	0.2	+ 0.1	- 0.5
North-Western ..	2,235	1.2	+ 0.3	- 1.2	10,409	0.2	- 0.2	- 1.7
Yorkshire	1,310	0.7	+ 0.2	- 2.4	4,594	0.5	..	- 1.9
East Midlands ..	1,976	0.4	- 0.1	- 1.6	5,851	0.2	- 0.1	- 1.9
West Midlands ..	2,090	0.7	+ 0.2	- 0.7	8,560	0.5	- 0.1	- 2.0
Eastern & S.E. Count.	2,257	0.7	- 0.1	- 1.8	7,452	0.9	- 0.2	- 3.6
South-Western ..	1,120	0.5	- 0.2	- 0.7	8,698	0.2	+ 0.1	- 0.8
Wales	5,743	0.4	+ 0.1	- 0.5	10,120	0.2	0.1	- 0.9
Scotland	1,032	3.2	- 0.4	- 1.4	2,147	4.0	+ 1.0	- 3.4
Ireland								
Other Skilled Workers.								
London	29,370	0.5	- 0.1	- 1.9	85,329	3.1	+ 1.2	- 2.4
Northern Counties	17,965	0.3	- 0.1	- 1.9	60,254	1.6	+ 0.9	- 2.8
North-Western ..	8,842	0.4	+ 0.1	- 2.9	30,241	1.6	+ 0.8	- 3.1
Yorkshire	15,133	0.3	+ 0.1	- 1.6	49,815	0.9	0.4	- 2.4
East Midlands ..	22,270	0.8	+ 0.1	- 2.1	87,628	2.1	+ 0.6	- 2.1
West Midlands ..	23,446	1.1	+ 0.1	- 1.9	77,985	1.9	+ 0.3	- 2.1
Eastern & S.E. Count.	10,946	0.4	..	- 1.5	37,407	0.9	+ 0.2	- 1.4
South-Western ..	13,530	0.4	- 0.1	- 1.3	62,826	1.2	+ 0.1	- 2.0
Wales	5,743	0.4	+ 0.1	- 0.5	10,120	0.2	0.1	- 0.9
Scotland	1,032	3.2	- 0.4	- 1.4	2,147	4.0	+ 1.0	- 3.4
Ireland								
Navvies.								
London	49,074	2.0	..	- 4.6	139,358	3.6	..	- 4.2
Northern Counties	9,886	0.3	+ 0.1	- 0.8	33,193	0.8	+ 0.5	- 1.9
North-Western ..	29,370	0.5	- 0.1	- 1.9	85,329	3.1	+ 1.2	- 2.4
Yorkshire	17,965	0.3	- 0.1	- 1.9	60,254	1.6	+ 0.9	- 2.8
East Midlands ..	8,842	0.4	+ 0.1	- 2.9	30,241	1.6	+ 0.8	- 3.1
West Midlands ..	15,133	0.3	+ 0.1	- 1.6	49,815	0.9	0.4	- 2.4
Eastern & S.E. Count.	22,270	0.8	+ 0.1	- 2.1	87,628	2.1	+ 0.6	- 2.1
South-Western ..	23,446	1.1	+ 0.1	- 1.9	77,985	1.9	+ 0.3	- 2.1
Wales	10,946	0.4	..	- 1.5	37,407	0.9	+ 0.2	- 1.4
Scotland	13,530	0.4	- 0.1	- 1.3	62,826	1.2	+ 0.1	- 2.0
Ireland	1,032	3.8	+ 0.5	- 3.9	2,147	9.0	+ 2.9	- 0.7
Labourers.								
London	49,074	2.0	..	- 4.6	139,358	3.6	..	- 4.2
Northern Counties	9,886	0.3	+ 0.1	- 0.8	33,193	0.8	+ 0.5	- 1.9
North-Western ..	29,370	0.5	- 0.1	- 1.9	85,329	3.1	+ 1.2	- 2.4
Yorkshire	17,965	0.3	- 0.1	- 1.9	60,254	1.6	+ 0.9	- 2.8
East Midlands ..	8,842	0.4	+ 0.1	- 2.9	30,241	1.6	+ 0.8</	

PRINTING, BOOKBINDING AND PAPER TRADES. PRINTING TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT was good in December and better than a month ago, a considerable amount of overtime being reported. There was much scarcity of labour, especially of machinemen. The increase in the number of compositors unemployed in London at the end of the month was stated to be due to the holidays.

Returns from Trade Unions with a membership of 48,035 show that the percentage unemployed at the end of the month was 1.3, the same as a month ago. For December, 1914, the percentage was 4.8.

Districts.	No. of Members of Unions at end of Dec., 1915.	Percentage Unemployed at end of			Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Dec., 1915.	Nov., 1915.	Dec., 1914.	Month ago.	Year ago.
London	21,340	1.0	0.7	5.4	+ 0.3	- 4.4
Northern Counties and Yorkshire	4,969	1.1	0.9	4.4	+ 0.2	- 3.3
Lancs and Cheshire	6,284	1.6	1.6	4.8	..	- 3.2
East Midland and Eastern Counties	2,350	1.1	1.0	4.0	+ 0.1	- 2.9
West Midlands	2,629	0.6	1.2	3.3	- 0.6	- 2.7
S. & S.-W. Counties and Wales	3,747	0.9	1.2	3.2	- 0.3	- 2.3
Scotland	4,590	1.6	1.9	3.6	- 0.3	- 2.0
Ireland	2,126	5.5	5.8	9.0	- 0.3	- 3.5
UNITED KINGDOM ..	48,035	1.3	1.3	4.8	..	- 3.5

According to returns received from firms employing 15,420 workpeople in the week ended 18th December the number of persons employed showed a decrease of 0.3 per cent. on a month ago, while the amount of wages paid increased by 0.6 per cent. Compared with a year ago, there were decreases of 11.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 1.0 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

Districts.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
London	5,919	- 0.2	- 6.4	£ 10,523	+ 1.0	+ 3.4
Northern Counties and Yorkshire	1,268	+ 0.6	- 17.1	1,710	+ 2.6	- 6.0
Lancashire and Cheshire	2,084	+ 0.1	- 10.3	3,171	+ 5.1	+ 2.5
Midland and Eastern Counties	2,612	- 0.2	- 17.3	3,639	- 1.8	- 9.2
Scotland	1,853	- 0.3	- 14.7	2,536	+ 2.7	- 0.3
Other Districts ..	1,679	- 2.2	- 7.8	2,246	- 6.3	- 7.0
UNITED KINGDOM ..	15,420	- 0.3	- 11.1	23,825	+ 0.6	- 1.0

BOOKBINDING TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT continued good, with a considerable amount of overtime, and a shortage of labour.

Returns from firms employing 10,283 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease in the number employed of 0.3 per cent. compared with a month ago; the amount of wages paid increased by 1.5 per cent. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 10.5 per cent. in the number employed, but an increase of 4.5 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

Districts.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
London	3,591	- 1.1	- 10.6	£ 4,532	+ 0.4	+ 3.4
Northern Counties and Yorkshire	713	+ 2.6	- 14.9	640	+ 7.0	- 4.5
Lancashire and Cheshire	1,870	+ 0.9	- 6.9	1,761	+ 5.6	+ 6.1
Midland and Eastern Counties	1,142	- 0.3	- 14.0	1,010	+ 3.8	+ 1.9
Scotland	2,084	- 1.0	- 9.7	1,744	- 0.6	+ 15.0
Other Districts ..	883	+ 0.2	- 10.7	699	- 2.9	- 2.9
UNITED KINGDOM ..	10,283	- 0.3	- 10.5	10,386	+ 1.5	+ 4.5

Trade Unions with a membership of 5,681 had 0.8 per cent. unemployed at the end of December, 1915, compared with 0.6 per cent. a month ago, and 3.6 per cent. a year ago.

	No. of Members of Unions at end of Dec., 1915.	Percentage Unemployed at end of			Increase (+) or Decrease (-) on a	
		Dec., 1915.	Nov., 1915.	Dec., 1914.	Month ago.	Year ago.
London	3,001	0.4	0.3	4.3	+ 0.1	- 3.9
Other Districts ..	2,680	1.2	0.8	2.8	+ 0.4	- 1.6
UNITED KINGDOM ..	5,681	0.8	0.6	3.6	+ 0.2	- 2.8

PAPER TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT continued good, and was much better than a year ago; a shortage of labour was frequently reported. Returns from firms employing 14,757 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed a decrease in the number employed of 0.6 per cent. compared with a month ago and of 1.8 per cent. compared with a year ago.

	Workpeople paid Wages in week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.
MACHINE-MADE PAPER AND MILLED BOARDS:			
Northern Counties	4,457	+ 0.2	+ 0.7
Midlands, Wales, and Ireland ..	906	- 2.4	+ 0.2
Southern Counties	4,997	- 1.5	- 2.5
Scotland	3,831	+ 0.0	- 3.8
TOTAL MACHINE-MADE PAPER, &C.	14,191	- 0.6	- 1.7
Hand-made Paper	566	- 1.2	- 5.2
TOTAL	14,757	- 0.6	- 1.8

Trade Unions in the machine-made paper trade with 3,711 members had 0.1 per cent. unemployed at the end of December, compared with 0.2 per cent. in each of the previous three months; for December, 1914, the percentage unemployed was 0.8, while short time was then frequently reported.

The imports of wood pulp amounted to 86,000 tons, an increase of 19,000 tons on a month ago and of 11,000 tons on a year ago, but 23,000 tons less than the quantity imported in December, 1913. Imports of all kinds of paper amounted to 1,069,000 cwts. in December, 1915, compared with 1,117,000 cwts. in November, 1915, 888,000 cwts. in December, 1914, and 1,088,000 cwts. in December, 1913. Since 1913 the imports of paper for printing or writing from Newfoundland have increased enormously, until this is now the most important source.

The exports (British and Irish) of paper were 203,000 cwts. in December, 1915, compared with 242,000 cwts. a month ago, 214,000 cwts. a year ago, and 258,000 cwts. in December, 1913.

GLASS TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT continued good, and a considerable amount of overtime was worked.

Returns from firms employing 10,701 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 1.9 per cent. in the number of workpeople employed compared with a month ago, and an increase of 1.8 per cent. in the amount of wages paid. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 9.0 per cent. in the number employed, but an increase of 4.1 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
BRANCHES.						
Glass Bottle	7,978	+ 2.0	- 9.3	£ 12,422	+ 1.0	+ 3.4
Flint Glass Ware (not bottles)	1,976	+ 1.9	- 8.1	2,716	+ 6.1	+ 8.5
Other Branches	747	+ 1.5	- 3.2	1,008	+ 0.7	+ 2.1
TOTAL	10,701	+ 1.9	- 9.0	17,146	+ 1.8	+ 4.1
DISTRICTS.						
North of England	1,150	+ 1.9	- 27.4	1,933	+ 0.2	- 18.8
Yorkshire	5,459	+ 2.9	- 5.8	8,949	+ 2.5	+ 7.1
Lancashire	1,200	+ 1.4	- 0.4	1,715	+ 0.5	+ 6.0
Worcestershire and Warwickshire	983	+ 1.9	- 6.7	1,434	+ 2.7	+ 10.7
Scotland	806	+ 2.7	- 19.3	1,273	+ 0.2	+ 2.1
Other parts of the United Kingdom	1,103	- 2.5	- 1.3	1,842	+ 1.8	+ 16.7
TOTAL	10,701	+ 1.9	- 9.0	17,146	+ 1.8	+ 4.1

EMPLOYMENT in the glass bottle trade was good generally in Yorkshire and other centres, though some unemployment of older men was caused by the breaking of "sets" through young men enlisting. At Barnsley and Sunderland, however, employment was reported as moderate. Flint glass makers and cutters in the Midlands were well employed, and pressed glass makers on the Tyne and Wear reported a continued scarcity of labour. With sheet and plate glass workers at St. Helens employment was reported as good.

The imports of glass during December were valued at £239,000, as compared with £226,000 in November, and £84,000 a year ago. The value in December, 1913, was £327,000.

The exports of glass were valued at £91,000, compared with £83,000 a month ago, £95,000 a year ago, and £140,000 in December, 1913.

POTTERY TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT continued good generally, especially in the manufacture of the cheaper grades of china and earthenware, and showed little change compared with a month ago. A deficiency of male labour was again widely experienced, and females were being introduced to an increasing extent. Comparatively little short time was reported, whilst in some cases the usual Christmas holidays had to be curtailed. Employment with makers of tiles and sanitary ware continued quiet, and showed a decline on the previous month.

Returns from firms employing 17,666 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.2 per cent. in the numbers employed, and a decrease of 0.8 per cent. in the amount of wages paid, compared with a month ago. Compared with a year ago there was a decrease of 2.9 per cent. in the numbers employed, but an increase of 16.2 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
BRANCHES.						
China Manufacture	3,188	+ 0.1	+ 8.0	£ 4,131	- 3.4	+ 22.2
Earthenware Manufacture	11,412	+ 0.8	- 1.8	11,778	+ 0.5	+ 18.7
Other Branches (including unspecified)	3,066	- 1.6	- 15.5	2,929	- 2.4	+ 0.6
TOTAL	17,666	+ 0.2	- 2.9	18,838	- 0.8	+ 16.2
DISTRICTS.						
Potteries	13,507	+ 0.1	- 1.5	13,430	- 0.4	+ 20.3
Other Districts	4,159	+ 0.5	- 7.3	5,408	- 1.9	+ 7.0
TOTAL	17,666	+ 0.2	- 2.9	18,838	- 0.8	+ 16.2

EMPLOYMENT in the porcelain and china section continued good in the Potteries and other principal centres, but showed on the whole a slight decline on a month ago. In the earthenware section employment generally was good, and rather better than in the previous month.

FOOD PREPARATION TRADES.

THESE trades continued extremely busy, and there was a further slight increase in the numbers employed owing entirely to a marked increase in the bacon and preserved meat section, all the other sections except one showing some decline. Unlike many trades at the present time, the numbers employed showed a large increase as compared with a year ago. In spite of this, overtime was universal, and there was general complaint as to the shortage of labour.

Sugar Refining.—The stoppage of import of Continental refined sugar was still chiefly responsible for the pressure in this industry. There was a considerable shortage of all classes of workpeople, especially of labourers.

Cocoa, Chocolate and Sugar Confectionery.—A shortage of female as well as of male labour was referred to. There was an especial shortage of sugar boilers and labourers. The industry was stated to be handicapped by the difficulty in obtaining and delivering goods and by the high prices of raw materials.

Biscuits, Cakes, &c.—The shortage of labour was reported as particularly acute in this industry, and it was handicapped also by a shortage of tin boxes, which arose from the same cause. Much of the work was on Government orders; the ordinary demand was still restricted by the increased price of the finished products consequent upon the high price of raw materials.

Jams, Marmalade, &c.—This industry was largely engaged upon Government orders. The shortage of carters, packers and labourers suitable for heavy work was particularly acute.

Bacon and Preserved Meats.—In this section the numbers employed showed a marked increase as compared with the previous month. Firms were busy on Government orders. A shortage of bottles and cases was reported.

Pickles and Sauces.—There was an especial shortage of packers. They were being replaced as far as possible by girls, but there was a shortage of this class of labour also, owing to the competition of the munition factories. The export trade was still of reduced proportions, but Government contracts more than made up for this.

Returns from firms employing 67,843 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the number employed and of 0.5 per cent. in the amount of wages paid as compared with the previous month. Compared with a year ago there was an increase of 13.5 per cent. in the numbers employed and of 27.1 per cent. in the amount of wages paid.

Trade.	Workpeople.			Earnings.		
	Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Week ended 18th Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a	
		Month ago.	Year ago.		Month ago.	Year ago.
Sugar Refining, &c.	5,410	+ 0.6	+ 4.9	£ 8,752	+ 1.2	+ 16.7
Cocoa, Chocolate and Sugar Confectionery	33,607	- 1.1	+ 10.1	34,796	- 0.5	+ 27.1
Biscuits, Cakes, &c.	11,875	- 0.6	+ 19.2	11,345	- 1.6	+ 23.8
Jams, Marmalade, &c.	8,389	- 0.7	+ 20.4	7,565	- 0.7	+ 35.6
Bacon and Preserved Meats	7,758	+ 7.9	+ 23.5	8,124	+ 8.7	+ 35.6
Pickles, Sauces, &c.	804	- 1.5	- 5.1	701	+ 2.6	+ 12.3
TOTAL	67,843	+ 0.1	+ 13.5	71,303	+ 0.5	+ 27.1

AGRICULTURE.*

WORK on the land was much hindered during December by wet and often stormy weather, and hence, though the shortage of labour continued, it was not so severely felt.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

In the northern counties little work was possible on the land, owing to the sodden state of the ground, and—except in the case of casual labour for threshing—the shortage in the supply of labour has not caused much inconvenience. In most districts of Lincolnshire and Norfolk, also, the scarcity does not appear to have been seriously felt. Many women, however, were being employed in North Cambridgeshire and in Essex and Hertfordshire the shortage of labour had increased.

In Kent, Surrey and Sussex very little work could be done during the month, owing to wet weather. The deficiency of labour in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset has been particularly felt on the dairy farms, and other work has consequently had to be neglected.

In North Wales some districts had sufficient labour for the time being, while others were very short. In the south-west of Cardiganshire the supply of labour was said to be ample for present requirements. In South Wales most of the men available were needed for tending stock.

SCOTLAND.

The situation throughout Scotland has remained practically unchanged since last month. The weather conditions have been very unfavourable for outdoor work, and although work has consequently fallen seriously into arrears, the scarcity of men caused less inconvenience than would otherwise have been the case.

* Based on information supplied by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Board of Agriculture for Scotland.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

EMPLOYMENT was fairly good on the whole, but was hindered to some extent by unfavourable weather.

East Coast.—At Hartlepool employment with fishermen was moderate and worse than a month ago; with fish curers it continued slack. It remained good with fishermen at Hull and Grimsby and with fish dock labourers at the former port; with fish dock labourers at Grimsby it was again fair; with fish curers it was good at Hull and bad at Grimsby. Employment continued slack at Brightlingsea, Harwich and Southwold.

South Coast.—At Plymouth, Brixham and towns on the Cornish coast, fishing operations were greatly hindered by stormy weather. It continued fairly good with fish packers, carters and curers.

Scotland.—With fishermen employment continued good at Aberdeen and bad at Fraserburgh, and was moderate at Peterhead and Macduff; with fish dock labourers and fish curers it was again reported as fair at Aberdeen, bad at Macduff and Fraserburgh, and practically suspended at Peterhead. Employment showed an improvement at Dundee and a decline at Montrose. It was fair at Arbroath.

FISH LANDED IN DECEMBER, 1915.

	Quantity.		Value.	
	Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on Dec., 1914.	Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on Dec., 1914.
	Cwts.	Cwts.	£	£
Fish (other than shell):				
England and Wales ..	319,072	- 73,367	547,570	+ 37,300
Scotland	176,820	38,551	182,460	+ 12,184
Ireland	36,640	+ 10,752	24,601	+ 10,693
TOTAL	532,532	- 101,166	754,631	+ 60,177
Shell Fish	—	—	30,043	+ 6,280
TOTAL VALUE	—	—	784,674	+ 66,457

DOCK AND RIVERSIDE LABOUR.

EMPLOYMENT in London and the other principal ports was good generally.

LONDON AND TILBURY.

London.—Employment continued good and was about the same as a month ago. A certain amount of congestion occurred at the docks, due largely to the shortage of river craft and of the means of land transport.

The average number of labourers employed daily at the docks and principal wharves was 18,873, a decrease of less than 0.1 per cent. on a month ago, but an increase of 4.0 per cent. on a year ago.

Period.	Average Daily Number of Labourers employed in Docks and at Principal Wharves in London.				
	In Docks			At Wharves making Returns.	Total in Docks and at Principal Wharves.
	By the Port of London Authority or through Contractors.	By Ship-owners.	Total.		
Week ended Dec. 4th	7,690	3,030	10,720	8,162	18,882
" " " 11th	7,538	3,284	11,282	8,056	19,377
" " " 18th	7,866	2,270	10,256	8,094	18,350
" " " 25th	7,842	3,056	10,898	7,989	18,887
Average for 4 weeks ended 25th Dec., 1915	7,881	2,903	10,784	8,069	18,873
Average for Nov., 1915	7,486	3,275	10,761	8,124	18,885
" " " Dec., 1914	6,976	3,323	10,299	7,855	18,154

The numbers employed at the docks and principal wharves on each day* in December, 1915, were as follows:—

Day of Month.	Number Employed.	Day of Month.	Number Employed.	Day of Month.	Number Employed.
1	18,598	11	17,697	21	18,584
2	19,631	12	18,317	22	19,316
3	19,082	13	18,389	23	19,074
4	18,679	14	17,828	24	17,828
5	18,732	15	17,420	25	18,116
6	19,710	16	18,654	26	18,882
7	20,292	17	18,980	27	18,882
8	19,945	18	18,344	28	18,838
9	19,977	19	18,632	29	18,451
10	19,977	20	18,632	30	18,451
				31	18,451

* Sundays and holidays are omitted.

Tilbury.—The mean daily number employed at the docks during December was 1,885, as compared with 2,172 a month ago, and 2,124 during December, 1914.

OTHER ENGLISH AND WELSH PORTS.

East Coast.—Dock and quayside labourers continued well employed on the Tyne and at Blyth, especially on imported cargoes of ironstone, timber, wood pulp and grain. Employment continued good at Hartlepool and very good at Middlesbrough. With dock labourers it was fair at Hull and bad and worse than a month ago at Grimsby and Goole; with coalworkers it was moderate at Hull and Grimsby and bad at Goole. At Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Lynn there was a further decline on a month ago; employment generally was slack, but a large proportion of the men had taken other work. Employment continued fair at Ipswich and slack at Harwich.

South and West Coasts.—There was an improvement at Plymouth, where employment was good; it was good also at Falmouth and Hayle, and very good at Dartmouth. It continued good at Bristol, where some shortage of labour was experienced; there was a further improvement at Gloucester. At Cardiff, Barry and Newport dock labourers continued fairly well employed; with coal trimmers employment was very good. There was a further improvement at Liverpool, where employment was good, a considerable amount of overtime being reported at the North End docks.

SCOTTISH AND IRISH PORTS.

Employment was fairly good at Leith. It was good at Dundee. There was a slight decline at Glasgow, where employment was fair; it was very good at the Ayrshire ports. Employment was good and better than a month ago at Belfast, fair at Limerick, but bad and worse than a month ago at Cork.

SEAMEN.

The supply of seamen for mercantile ships during December was not quite equal to the demand. A shortage of fully-qualified men was reported from Newcastle, Middlesbrough, South Shields, Barry, Penarth, Southampton and the London docks, except Victoria Docks, where the supply was at times in excess of the demand. At Hull also the supply was stated to be slightly in excess of the demand.

Returns received from certain selected ports show that 30,806 seamen* shipped on foreign-going vessels during December, an increase of 620 on November, but a decrease of 7,355 on December, 1914.

Principal Ports.	Number of Seamen* shipped in					
	Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a		Year ended		
		Month ago.	Year ago.	Dec., 1914.	Dec., 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) in 1915.
ENGLAND & WALES:						
<i>East Coast—</i>						
Tyne Ports	1,497	+ 119	- 674	29,292	20,161	- 9,131
Sunderland	97	- 144	- 88	4,202	2,967	- 1,235
Middlesbrough	191	+ 2	+ 60	2,919	2,763	- 126
Hull	982	- 85	- 239	15,523	14,154	- 1,374
Grimsby	18	- 44	+ 7	785	562	- 223
<i>Bristol Channel—</i>						
Bristol	742	- 26	- 460	14,629	14,874	+ 245
Newport, Mon.	826	- 40	+ 15	10,215	11,087	+ 872
Cardiff	3,423	- 336	- 1,016	52,927	52,070	- 857
Swansea	132	- 64	- 66	4,238	3,490	- 748
<i>Other Ports—</i>						
Liverpool	10,368	- 712	- 4,729	202,493	149,476	- 53,017
London	7,210	+ 383	- 568	102,631	94,754	- 7,877
Southampton	1,711	+ 1,065	+ 374	41,655	16,557	- 25,098
SCOTLAND:						
Leith	284	- 187	- 99	4,500	4,074	- 426
Kirkcaldy, Methil, and Grangemouth	61	+ 24	- 17	2,618	725	- 1,893
Glasgow	3,094	+ 766	+ 404	44,183	35,245	- 8,938
IRELAND:						
Dublin	7	- 68	- 117	944	801	- 143
Belfast	163	- 33	- 142	2,263	4,744	+ 2,481
TOTAL	30,806	+ 620	- 7,355	536,022	428,534	- 107,488

* It will be understood that the numbers given are the numbers of separate engagements, and not of separate individuals.

† Including Avonmouth and Portishead. ‡ Including Barry and Penarth.

STATISTICAL TABLES.

TRADE DISPUTES.*

[Based on Returns from Employers and Workpeople.]

DISPUTES IN DECEMBER.

Number and Magnitude.—The number of disputes beginning in December was 17, as compared with 40 in the previous month, and 17 in December, 1914. In these new disputes 2,814 workpeople were directly, and 331 indirectly, involved; and these figures, when added to the number of workpeople involved in disputes which began before December, and were still in progress at the beginning of the month, give a total of 8,817 workpeople involved in trade disputes in December, 1915, as compared with 11,988 in November, 1915, and 3,065 in December, 1914.

New Disputes in December, 1915.—In the following Table the new disputes for December are summarised by trades affected:—

Groups of Trades.	No. of Disputes.	No. of Workpeople Involved.		
		Directly.	Indirectly.	Total.
Building	2	118	—	118
Coal Mining	2	1,025	90	1,115
Engineering	5	480	241	721
Shipbuilding	1	35	—	35
Textile	1	90	—	90
Transport	1	160	—	160
Miscellaneous	5	906	—	906
TOTAL, DECEMBER, 1915	17	2,814	331	3,145
TOTAL, NOVEMBER, 1915	40	3,639	1,80	4,769
TOTAL, DECEMBER, 1914	17	1,190	2	1,192

Causes.—Of the 17 new disputes, 10 arose on demands for advances in wages, 3 on other wages questions, 2 on questions of Trade Union principle, and 2 on questions respecting the employment of particular classes or persons.

Results.—During the month settlements were effected in the case of 6 new disputes, directly involving 858 workpeople, and 2 old disputes, directly involving 860 workpeople. Of these new and old disputes 4 were decided in favour of the workpeople, 2 in favour of the employers, and 2 were compromised. In the case of 5 other disputes work was resumed pending further negotiations.

Aggregate Duration.—The number of working days lost in December by disputes which began or were settled in that month amounted to 48,900. In addition, 25,900 working days were lost owing to disputes which began before December and were still in progress at the end of the month. Thus the total aggregate duration in December of all disputes, new and old, was 74,800 days, as compared with 69,000 in the previous month, and with 49,200 in December, 1914.

COMPARISON OF 1913 AND 1914.

[See Trade Disputes section of special article on Page 6.]

PRINCIPAL DISPUTES WHICH BEGAN OR ENDED IN DECEMBER.

Occupations and Locality.†	Number of Workpeople involved.		Date when Dispute began.	Duration in Working Days.	Cause or Object.†	Result.†
	Directly.	Indirectly.†				
BUILDING:—						
Carpenters and Joiners—Leeds	700	—	29th Nov.	24	For advance in wages of 2d. per hour, following employers' refusal to grant war bonus of 2s. 6d. per week.	Immediate advance of 3/4d. per hour granted, with promise of a further advance of 3/4d. per hour on 1st July, 1916.
ENGINEERING:—						
Card setting machine tenters, card dressers, &c.—Yorkshire and Lancashire	500	—	13th Dec.	..	For increase in wages of 15 per cent.	No settlement reported.
PRINTING, PAPER AND ALLIED TRADES:—						
Compositors, &c. (book and jobbing)—Dublin	300	..	3rd Dec.	28	For advance in wages of 2s. 6d. per week.	Advance granted upon certain conditions.
Paper mill workers—Bristol (near)	247	..	1st Dec.	..	For advance in wages.	No settlement reported.

DISPUTES STILL IN PROGRESS.—28 disputes, involving about 5,000 workpeople, were in progress at the time of going to press.

* 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.

† The occupations printed in italics are those of workpeople "indirectly involved" (i.e., thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred but not themselves parties to the disputes). The statements of cause and result do not apply to these persons.

DISTRESS COMMITTEES.

The total number of Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, whose registers were open at the end of December, 1915, was 19, compared with 78 in December, 1914.

The total number of persons who received employment relief during December was 74, as compared with 6,055 a year ago, a decrease of 5,981 persons. Employment was also provided for 20 persons by arrangement with employers and local authorities.

The aggregate duration of employment relief decreased from 70,276 days in December, 1914, to 1,606 days in December, 1915, and the average duration of employment was 21.7 days, compared with 11.6 a year ago.

The total amount of wages paid in December, 1915, was £190, compared with £11,111 in December, 1914; the average earnings were 51s. 4d., compared with 36s. 8d. a year ago.

Districts.	No. of Applicants given Employment Relief.		Aggregate Duration of Employment Relief.		Total Amount of Wages Paid.	
	Dec., 1915.	Dec., 1914.	Dec., 1915.	Dec., 1914.	Dec., 1915.	Dec., 1914.
London:						
County	4	2,117	62	34,919	7	5,054
Outer	—	1,929	—	13,437	—	2,518
Total London	4	4,046	62	48,356	7	7,572
Northern Counties	—	36	..	254	..	46
Lancs. and Cheshire	—	447	..	5,728	..	675
Yorkshire	—	257	..	1,410	..	282
Midlands	—	397	..	3,357	..	689
Eastern Counties	—	130	..	1,047	..	217
Southern Counties	15	107	256	1,441	48	251
Wales and Monmouth	—	292	..	4,102	..	911
ENGLAND AND WALES	19	5,712	318	65,695	55	10,553
Scotland	41	88	1,120	2,157	114	202
Ireland	14	255	168	2,424	21	356
UNITED KINGDOM	74	6,055	1,606	70,276	190	11,111

NOTE.—In addition to table on page 29 of December "Labour Gazette," 12 persons at Bournemouth received employment relief for 152 days, for which £28 was paid in wages.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES.*

[Based on Returns from Employers and Workpeople.]

THE changes in wages reported to the Department as taking effect in December affected over 680,000 workpeople, and resulted in a net increase of nearly £23,500 per week. Coal mining accounted for nearly 563,000 of the workpeople affected, about 383,000 coal miners having their wages increased, while 180,000 (in South Wales) sustained a decrease. Increases were also granted to large bodies of workpeople in the textile trades, including the woollen and worsted industry, calico printing, and the linen trade, and in the iron and steel trades.

Changes in January-December, 1915.—The total number of workpeople whose rates of wages were reported to have been changed during 1915 was 3,165,000, and the net effect of all the changes reported was an increase of over £603,000 per week. An analysis of these changes, giving particulars of the increases reported during 1915 in each of the principal groups of trades, together with corresponding figures for 1914, will be found in the special article on page 4.

PRINCIPAL WAR BONUSES AND INCREASES IN RATES OF WAGES IN DECEMBER, 1915.

Trade.	Locality.	Date from which change took effect.	Occupations.	Approximate Number of Workpeople affected.	Particulars of Change.
Building	Sheffield	3 Dec.	Carpenters and joiners	1,000	Increase of ¼d. per hour (9¼d. to 10¼d.).
	Leeds	29 Dec.	Carpenters and joiners	900	Increase of ¼d. per hour (9¼d. to 10¼d.).
	Leicester	1 Dec.	Bricklayers and masons	550	Increase of ¼d. per hour, making rate 10d. for bricklayers and 10¼d. for masons.
Coal Mining	Cumberland	Second pay-day in Dec.	Hewers and other underground workers and surface workers	7,700	Increase of 1d. per hour (10d. to 11d.). Increase of 5 per cent. upon the standards of April, 1915.
	Federated Districts	Second pay-day in Dec.	Hewers, other underground workers, and surface workers	360,000	Increase of 5 per cent. upon the standard of Dec., 1911, making wages of hewers 15 per cent. above that standard, excluding the war bonus granted in May, 1915, and 32½ per cent. above standard, including war bonus.
Coal Mining	South Staffs. and East Worcestershire	Second pay-day in Dec.	Hewers, other underground workers, and surface workers	9,000	Increase of 7½ per cent., making wages of hewers 80 per cent. above the standard of 1888 on the Gloucestershire side, and 85 per cent. and 87½ per cent. respectively on the Somerset side.
	Bristol District	Dec.	Hewers and other underground workers, and banksmen	2,350	Increase of 7½ per cent., making wages 80 per cent. above the standard of 1888.
Fig Iron Manufacture	Radstock District	16 Dec.	Hewers, other underground workers, banksmen, enginemmen and stokers	3,750	Increase, under sliding scale, of 10 per cent.
	South Staffs.	6 Dec.	Blast furnacemen	1,000	Increase, under sliding scale, of 10 per cent.
Iron and Steel Manufacture	Midlands	6 Dec.	Iron puddlers	20,000	Increase under sliding scale of 1s. per ton, making rate 12s. 9d., plus bonus of 6d.
	South Wales	6 Dec.	Iron millmen, iron puddlers, and iron and steel millmen, enginemmen, etc.	2,200	Increase, under sliding scale, of 10 per cent.
Iron and Steel Manufacture	West Scotland	20 Dec.	Steel millmen, enginemmen, crane-men, etc.	2,750	Increase, under sliding scale, of 2½ per cent.
	Bradford and District	Dec.	Gas producermen and chargewheelers, woollen and worsted operatives	1,850 1,000 25,000	Increase of 2½ per cent. War bonus of 5 per cent. increased to 7½ per cent.
Textile	Huddersfield, and the Colne and Holme Valleys	Pay-day nearest 24 Dec.	Dyers, finishers, and pressers in woollen and worsted manufacturing establishments	1,800	War grant of 1s. 6d. per week to males receiving under 18s. per week and to all women and girls, and of 3s. per week to males receiving 18s. or more per week.
	Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Glasgow District	Dec.	Workpeople employed by calico printers	10,500	Increase of 2s. per week to men rated at £3 or less, and of 2s. per week to youths under 18, women and girls.
Textile	Oldham	First pay-day in Dec.	Velvet weavers, winders, loom over-takers, beamers, twisters, drawers, dressers and slashers	3,000	War bonus of 5 per cent. with revision of prices for certain extras for over-takers, estimated to result in an additional increase of 1s. to 2s. per week.
	Nottingham	First pay-day after 11 Dec.	Lace makers—Curtain section	800	War bonus of 2s. 6d. per week.
Textile	North of Ireland	First pay-day in Dec.	Plain net section	800	War bonus of 1s. 3d. per man per machine on mosquito nets, and of 5 per cent. on bobbin nets.
	North of Ireland	1 Dec.	Dressers, roughers, preparers, spinners, doffers, weavers, and other workpeople in the linen industry	12,000	Increase of 2s. per week to men over 18 and 1s. per week to youths, women and girls, with an equivalent advance in piece rates.
Boot and Shoe	United Kingdom	1st full pay-week in Dec.	Boot and shoe operatives (excluding those employed in the heel building department and stock or shoe-room workers)	4	Increase of 1s. per week in recognised minimum rates to men 23 years of age and over.
Transport	North-East Coast	13 Dec.	Coal trimmers	1,500	War bonus of 12½ per cent. increased to 20 per cent.
	Newcastle-on-Tyne	1st pay in Dec.	Carters	1,300	War bonus of 3s. per week increased to 5s. per week.
Transport	Tyne	20 Dec.	Dock labourers	800	War bonus of 1d. per hour for timber workers increased to 2d. per hour, and various increases in bonuses to piece workers on ores, grain, &c.
Bookbinding	Scotland	15 Dec.	Bookbinders and machine rulers	900	Increase of 2s. 6d. per week in recognised minimum time rates.
Woodworking	Scotland	18 Dec.	Sawyers, wood-turners, wood machinist, &c.	1,000	Increase of ½d. per hour or 2s. per week.

DECREASE IN RATES OF WAGES IN DECEMBER, 1915.

Coal Mining	S. Wales and Mon.	1 Dec.	Hewers, other underground workers, and surface workers	180,000	Decrease of 5 per cent. upon the standard of 1915, leaving wages 25½ above that standard.
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Changes in January, 1916.—Full particulars will appear in the February Gazette of the following important changes arranged to take place in January in the textile trades:—

War bonus of 5 per cent. to cotton weavers in Lancashire; and increases and extension of bonuses previously granted to woollen and worsted operatives in the Huddersfield, Heavy Woollen, and Morley districts.

* Exclusive of agricultural labourers, seamen, railway servants, police and Government employees.

† To supersede war bonuses previously paid.

‡ This increase applied to the United Kingdom generally; but as the great majority of the workpeople were already receiving more than the recognised minimum rates, the number whose rates were increased is stated to be only a small proportion of the total number employed. Statistics are not available, however, as to the exact numbers concerned.

PRICES OF WHEAT, FLOUR, AND BREAD.

I.—WHEAT AND FLOUR.

(a) Supplies.

Imports.—The quantity of wheat and wheat meal and flour imported into the United Kingdom during December, 1915, together with an increase or decrease compared with December, 1914 and 1913, is shown in the following Table:—

	Quantity imported during December, 1915.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) compared with	
		December, 1914.	December, 1913.
WHEAT.			
From Russia	Cwts. 81,200	Cwts. - 300	Cwts. - 805,200
" United States	6,280,800	+ 2,747,695	+ 2,568,700
" British East Indies	2,300	- 1,219,600	- 521,700
" Australia	-	- 20,400	- 364,609
" Canada	2,613,000	- 173,500	+ 279,700
" Other Countries	13,200	- 36,000	- 120,600
Total	8,990,500	+ 1,297,895	+ 1,046,291
WHEAT MEAL AND FLOUR.			
From United States	398,200	- 340,378	- 203,874
" Canada	254,500	+ 7,710	- 112,810
" Other Countries	13,200	- 36,600	- 130,600
Total	665,900	- 369,268	- 447,284

During the first four months (September—December) of the current cereal year 1915-16 the imports of wheat totalled 29,141,500 cwts., compared with 36,817,930 cwts., and 32,589,852 cwts. in the corresponding period of the 1914-15 and 1913-14 seasons. The figures for wheat meal and flour were 2,980,800 cwts., 3,382,883 cwts., and 4,598,804 cwts. respectively.

Deliveries of British Wheat.—In the following Table the deliveries of wheat by farmers at the various markets of England and Wales from which returns are received by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries are shown for the first eighteen weeks of the current cereal year, together with the increase or decrease compared with a year ago and with two years ago:—

	Quantity delivered.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) compared with	
		1914.	1913.
1915.			
Thirteen weeks ended November 27th	Quarters. 972,938	Quarters. - 120,405	Quarters. + 149,614
Five weeks ended January 1st, 1916	446,440	+ 108,838	+ 148,894
Total	1,419,378	- 11,567	+ 298,508

(b) Prices.

In the following Table particulars are given of the average declared values and market prices of wheat and flour during December, 1915, with the increase compared with a month ago and a year ago:—

	December, 1915.	Increase compared with	
		November, 1915.	December, 1914.
WHEAT.—			
Imported, average declared value per 480 lb.	s. d. 53 6	s. a. 1 8	s. d. 8 9
Imported spot price at Liverpool per 480 lb.:			
No. 1 North Manitoba (new): Average price	60 5	4 6	10 7
No. 2 Hard Winter (old): Average price	60 5*	1 0	..†
No. 2 Hard Winter Gulf (new): Average price	57 2	3 0	9 3
Choice white Karachi: Average price	61 11‡	4 4	13 0
British—Gazette average price per 480 lb. (England & Wales)	53 6	0 6	11 0
English white wheat per 504 lb. (London)	58 0	0 7	10 1
FLOUR.—			
Imported, average declared value per cwt.	15 9		3 0
Town Households, London (ex mill, less usual discount), per sack of 280 lb.: average price	47 3	1 11	9 0

* Average of 11 quotations during first half of the month.

† No quotations in December, 1914.

‡ Average of 13 quotations.

During December the prices of imported wheat rose steadily, practically the whole supply coming from the United States and Canada. At the beginning of December the "spot" price of No. 1 Northern Manitoba (new wheat) at Liverpool was about 57s. per quarter, by the middle of the month the quotation was over 59s., and by the end of the month it had reached 64s. Similarly, No. 2 Hard Winter (new Gulf wheat) rose from 54s. 6d. on 1st December to approximately 59s. 6d. on the 31st. The prices at present quoted (13th January) are 66s. 6d. for No. 1 Northern Manitoba and about 61s. for No. 2 Hard Winter. The price of British wheat remained fairly steady during the month, but the returns received in the week ended 8th January, 1916, showed an increase of 2s. per quarter over the average for December. Town households flour in London rose 2s. per 280 lb. during December, and on 10th January there was a further increase of 1s.

II.—BREAD.

Returns received from 120 of the principal Master Bakers' Associations and 30 returns received from other sources are summarised below. In these Tables the predominant prices, i.e., the prices at which the bulk of the bread was sold, are utilised, but it will be understood that bread was also sold at both lower and higher prices.

The following Table shows the mean predominant price in different parts of the country at 1st January, as compared with a month ago and a year ago:—

District.	Mean Predominant Price per 4 lb. on		
	1st Jan., 1916.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) compared with	
		1st Dec., 1915.	1st Jan., 1915.
London:—	d. 8½	d. + ¼	d. + 1½
N. & N.W.	8½	+ ¼	+ 1½
E. & N.E.	8½	+ ¼	+ 1½
S.E.	8½	+ ¼	+ 2
S.W.	8½	+ ¼	+ 2
W. & W.C.	8½	+ ¼	+ 1½
Northern Counties & Yorkshire	8	-	+ 1½
Lancashire & Cheshire	8	+ ¼	+ 1½
Midlands	8	+ ¼	+ 1½
Eastern Counties	8	+ ¼	+ 1½
Southern Counties	8½	-	+ 1½
South Western Counties & Wales	8	+ ¼	+ 1½
Scotland	8½	-	+ 1½
GREAT BRITAIN	8½	+ ¼	+ 1½

Of the prices at which bread was sold in each of the following towns, predominant prices were as under:—

Place	Predominant Price per 4 lb. on 1st Jan., 1916.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) as compared with		Last Change.*
		Month ago.	Year ago.	
London	d. 8½	d. + ¼	d. + 2	Dec., '15 + ¼
Birmingham	8 & 8½	-	+ 1½	Nov., '15 + ½
Bristol	7½ & 8	-	+ 1½	June, '15 - ½
Cardiff	8	-	+ 1	June, '15 - ½
Derby	8	+ ½	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Hull	8	-	+ 1	June, '15 - ½
Ipswich	8	-	+ 1½	Nov., '15 + ½
Leeds	8	+ ¼	+ 1½	Nov., '15 + ½
Leicester	8	+ ¼	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Liverpool	8 to 8½	+ ¼	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Manchester	8	-	+ 1	Nov., '15 + ½
Middlesbrough	8 to 8½	-	+ 1½	June, '15 - ½
Norwich	7½	+ ¼	+ 1½	June, '15 - ½
Nottingham	7½ to 8½	+ ¼	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Plymouth	8 to 8½	+ ¼	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Southampton	8½	+ ¼	+ 1½	O.t., '15 + ½
Stoke-on-Trent	7½	+ ¼	+ 1½	Dec., '15 + ½
Wolverhampton	8	+ ¼	+ 1½	Nov., '15 + ½
Aberdeen	7½ & 8	-	+ 0½	Oct., '15 - ¼
Dundee	8	-	+ 1½	Apr., '15 + ½
Edinburgh	9	+ ¼	+ 2	Dec., '15 + ½
Glasgow	8	-	+ 1	May, '15 + ½
Belfast	8	-	+ 1½	May, '15 + ½
Dublin	8	-	+ 1½	May, '15 + ½

* Entries in this column are exclusive of changes applying for a short time only, unless previous columns are affected by such changes.

Since 1st January there have been a number of increases in prices. The predominant prices of bread in London since 3rd January have been 8½d. and 9d.

PAUPERISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

[Data supplied by the Local Government Boards in England, Scotland and Ireland.]

THE number of paupers relieved on one day in December, 1915, in the 35 urban districts named below corresponded to a rate of 165 per 10,000. Compared with November, 1915, the total number of paupers relieved increased by 977 (or 0.3 per cent.), the rate per 10,000 showing little change. The number of indoor paupers increased by 1,502 (or 1.1 per cent.), and the number of outdoor paupers decreased by 525 (or 0.3 per cent.). Twelve districts showed no change, and seven showed decreases, the largest being in Aberdeen (3 per 10,000). In the remaining 16 districts the largest increases were in Coatbridge and Airdrie (8 per 10,000), and in the Central Metropolitan district (4 per 10,000).

Compared with December, 1914, the total number of paupers decreased by 45,523 (or 13.1 per cent.), and the rate per 10,000 decreased by 26. The number of indoor paupers decreased by 23,651 (or 14.2 per cent.), and the number of outdoor paupers by 21,875 (or 12.1 per cent.). Every district showed a decrease; the largest decreases were in the Central Metropolitan district (53 per 10,000) and in the East Metropolitan District (44 per 10,000). The average for the Metropolitan district was 34, and 5 other districts, all in England, showed decreases of 30 and under 40 per 10,000, while 17 districts showed decreases of 20 and under 30 per 10,000.

Selected Urban Districts.	Paupers on one day in second week of December, 1915.			Rate per 10,000 of Estimated Population.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) in rate as compared with a	
	In-door.	Out-door.	TOTAL.		Month ago.	Year ago.
ENGLAND & WALES.*						
<i>Metropolises.</i>						
West District	10,558	1,833	12,396	153	+ 2	- 26
North District	13,105	6,004	19,109	189	+ 1	- 36
Central District	3,921	1,246	5,167	355	+ 4	- 53
East District	11,950	4,500	16,450	245	+ 2	- 44
South District	20,817	12,572	33,389	178	..	- 29
TOTAL, Metropolises ..	60,351	26,160	86,511	191	..	- 34
<i>West Ham</i>	4,475	10,070	14,543	194	+ 3	- 27
<i>Other Districts.</i>						
Newcastle District ..	2,093	4,045	6,138	128	- 1	- 28
Stokeon and Tees District	1,127	3,268	4,395	177	..	- 29
Bolton, Oldham, &c. ..	4,047	3,351	7,438	92	- 2	- 30
Wigan District	1,933	4,526	6,459	147	..	- 29
Manchester District ..	9,012	5,930	14,942	146	..	- 29
Liverpool District	10,232	10,647	20,879	185	+ 2	- 25
Bradford District	1,941	1,628	3,569	95	- 1	- 14
Hull District	1,183	2,475	3,658	95	..	- 17
Leeds District	2,476	2,992	5,468	114	+ 2	- 19
Barnsley District	875	2,981	3,856	126	- 1	- 20
Sheffield District	2,835	3,394	6,229	137	..	- 35
Hull District	1,767	6,006	7,773	217	..	- 33
North Staffordshire ..	2,065	4,334	6,399	166	..	- 33
Nottingham District ..	1,849	3,843	5,692	124	+ 1	- 27
Leicester District	1,331	2,568	3,899	167	+ 1	- 33
Wolverhampton District	3,382	6,401	9,783	142	..	- 27
Birmingham District ..	6,358	4,851	11,009	130	+ 1	- 29
Bristol District	2,723	3,676	6,399	164	..	- 16
Cardiff & Swansea	2,223	5,549	7,772	176	..	- 20
TOTAL, "Other Districts" ..	59,427	81,605	141,032	142	..	- 24
SCOTLAND.*						
Glasgow District	3,419	17,426	20,845	219	..	- 25
Paisley & Greenock District	703	2,566	3,269	172	+ 1	- 16
Edinburgh & Leith District	1,372	4,946	6,217	154	- 1	- 13
Dundee and Dunfermline ..	636	2,034	2,670	133	+ 3	- 22
Aberdeen	423	2,707	3,130	188	- 3	- 20
Coatbridge & Airdrie ..	276	1,612	1,883	184	+ 8	- 27
TOTAL for the above } Scottish Districts ..	6,829	31,180	38,019	189	+ 1	- 21
IRELAND.†						
Dublin District	5,583	4,798	10,381	294	- 1	- 18
Belfast District	2,578	878	3,456	82	+ 1	- 13
Cork, Waterford, and Limerick District .. and	3,253	4,111	7,364	297	+ 2	- 17
Galway District	293	159	452	181	+ 2	- 9
TOTAL for the above Irish } Districts	11,707	9,946	21,653	194	..	- 16
TOTAL for above 35 Dis- } tricts in December, 1915 }	142,787	158,971	301,758	165	+ 1	- 26

* Exclusive of Vagrants, of Patients in the Fever and Smallpox Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Boards, and of Lunatics in Asylums, Registered Hospitals and Licensed Houses.
† Excluding Casuals, but including persons maintained in Institutions for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, &c., who are classified as not able-bodied.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE IN DECEMBER.* INSURANCE CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS.

THE total number of claims to unemployment benefit made at Labour Exchanges and other local offices of the Unemployment Fund during the five weeks ended 31st December, 1915, was 27,765, as compared with 21,316 during the four weeks ended 26th November, 1915, and with 55,610 during the four weeks ended 24th December, 1914. Of the total of 27,765 claims, 15,020 (or 54 per cent.) were claims for the direct payment of benefit, and 12,745 (or 46 per cent.) were claims for payment of benefit through associations of workpeople in the insured trades having arrangements with the Board of Trade under Section 105 of the National Insurance Act. The number of claims made during each of the five weeks was 5,136, 5,798, 5,478, 4,576 and 6,777, the average being 5,553, as compared with 5,329 in the four preceding weeks and with 13,903 in December, 1914.

The average weekly amount of unemployment benefit paid during the five weeks ended 31st December, 1915, was £1,922, as compared with £1,471 per week in the four preceding weeks, and with £7,780 per week in December, 1914; 57 per cent. of the amount was paid direct and 43 per cent. through associations.

Districts.	Average Weekly No. of Claims Made.			Average Weekly Amount of Benefit Paid.		
	Dec., 1915.	Nov., 1915.	Dec., 1914.	£ Dec., 1915.	£ Nov., 1915.	£ Dec., 1914.
London	1,571	1,889	2,875	497	549	1,875
South-Eastern	532	603	1,266	224	145	817
South-Western	451	484	748	169	139	331
West Midlands	164	149	869	52	33	431
East Midlands	177	173	676	50	32	414
Yorkshire	429	282	1,185	112	52	666
North-Western	929	817	3,017	321	141	1,574
Northern	124	94	727	35	23	337
Scotland	326	381	1,162	108	82	689
Wales	112	127	498	37	38	159
Ireland	738	430	880	314	232	597
UNITED KINGDOM ..	5,553	5,329	13,903	1,922	1,471	7,780

BOARD OF TRADE LABOUR EXCHANGES.

FOUR WEEKS ENDED 10TH DECEMBER, 1915.

THE total number of workpeople remaining on the Registers† of the Board of Trade Labour Exchanges (391 in number) on 10th December was 109,433, as compared with 116,250 on 12th November and 109,208 on 11th December, 1914.

Excluding cases in which persons were re-registered on again becoming unemployed, there were on the Register at some time or other during the period 342,576 workpeople (men 121,750, women 177,483, boys 17,428, and girls 25,915), as compared with 352,447 in the previous four weeks, and 347,653 in the four weeks ended 11th December, 1914.

The number of vacancies filled was 99,317, a daily average of 4,138, as compared with 4,363 in the previous four weeks, and with 3,970 in the four weeks ended 11th December, 1914.

The following Table summarises the work of the Exchanges during the period:—

	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
On Register at beginning of period	34,960	67,960	4,337	8,993	116,250
Registrations during period	92,298	113,221	13,448	17,318	236,285
Individuals registered	86,790	109,638	13,091	16,922	226,441
Re-registrations	5,608	3,698	357	396	9,959
On Register at end of period	33,767	64,382	3,813	7,471	109,433
Vacancies notified during period	81,032	44,769	10,424	11,066	147,291
Vacancies filled during period	47,626	35,843	7,751	8,097	99,317
Individuals placed	36,382	28,066	6,056	6,416	77,000
Applicants placed in other districts.	12,955	5,151	1,402	1,491	20,999

In the following Table are shown, for men and women, the proportion of vacancies filled to vacancies notified, and of vacancies filled to registrations (including those on the Registers at the beginning of the period) in the principal groups of trades:—

* The percentages unemployed in the Insured Trades will be found on pages 15 and 22.
† Excluding workmen in certain occupations of a more or less casual nature (e.g., dock labourers, cloth porters and cotton porters); these are dealt with in the last paragraph but one.
‡ See Note * on page 31.

Trades.	Proportion of Vacancies filled to Vacancies notified.		Proportion of Vacancies filled to Registrations.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
<i>Insured Trades—</i>				
Building, Construction of Works and Sawmilling	64.7	—	32.5	—
Engineering, Shipbuilding and Construction of Vehicles.	48.5	94.7	51.2	86.1
<i>Uninsured Trades—</i>				
Textiles	47.4	70.4	44.0	34.1
Dress	57.7	87.0	14.4	15.6
Transport	71.0	89.5	44.3	20.8
Agriculture	42.4	81.1	25.1	42.6
Paper, Prints, &c. .. .	39.5	82.7	26.8	40.7
Chemicals, Explosives, &c.	67.2	95.8	25.4	9.3
Food, Tobacco, Drink and Lodging	54.7	84.1	33.8	29.9
Commercial	78.9	75.0	18.7	16.3
Domestic	56.6	69.3	20.9	25.8
General Labourers	79.0	—	32.0	—
TOTAL	58.8	80.1	37.4	19.8

The average daily number of registrations and vacancies filled for the periods stated are shown below:—

District or Department.	Insured Trades.			Uninsured Trades.		
	4 weeks ended 10 Dec., 1915.	4 weeks ended 12 Nov., 1915.	4 weeks ended 11 Dec., 1914.	4 weeks ended 10 Dec., 1915.	4 weeks ended 12 Nov., 1915.	4 weeks ended 11 Dec., 1914.
REGISTRATIONS.*						
London	545	635	856	2,142	2,360	1,561
South-Eastern	224	228	347	590	658	367
South-Western	215	233	316	416	522	316
West Midlands	224	229	265	546	623	427
East Midlands	118	118	184	271	304	283
Yorkshire	198	193	358	605	636	442
North-Western	419	398	694	1,028	1,192	1,033
Northern	114	132	280	388	405	287
Scotland	222	232	391	786	785	525
Wales	158	220	307	230	260	158
Ireland	145	124	158	261	288	208
Men	3,381	3,551	4,080	14,665	17,366	10,772
Women	156	115	32	4,581	4,918	2,461
Boys	59	67	42	501	568	497
Girls	6	9	2	716	831	677
TOTAL	2,582	2,742	4,156	7,263	8,033	5,607

District or Department.	VACANCIES FILLED.					
	4 weeks ended 10 Dec., 1915.	4 weeks ended 12 Nov., 1915.	4 weeks ended 11 Dec., 1914.	4 weeks ended 10 Dec., 1915.	4 weeks ended 12 Nov., 1915.	4 weeks ended 11 Dec., 1914.
London	241	253	209	859	999	654
South-Eastern	132	131	161	204	212	147
South-Western	157	121	272	171	198	181
West Midlands	169	177	103	223	230	169
East Midlands	82	74	70	97	103	118
Yorkshire	123	152	127	214	213	212
North-Western	186	197	148	358	351	357
Northern	111	102	158	102	104	112
Scotland	183	200	177	288	276	253
Wales	104	152	180	75	68	70
Ireland	22	20	22	57	60	60
Men	1,240	1,351	1,572	745	913	978
Women	189	166	17	1,364	1,222	759
Boys	53	63	36	270	309	258
Girls	8	9	2	329	340	290
TOTAL	1,490	1,579	1,627	2,648	2,784	2,343

INSURED TRADES.†

Registrations.—The number of registrations effected during the period was 58,215 (men 53,452, women 3,235, boys 1,386, and girls 142). The total number of workpeople on the Register was 79,400 (men 71,819, women 5,239, boys 1,823, and girls 519). These figures exclude 3,752 cases in which persons were re-registered on again becoming unemployed during the period, and represent separate individuals.

Of the registrations among men, 60.1 per cent. were in building and construction of works, 28.8 per cent. in mechanical engineering, and 8.0 per cent. in shipbuilding.

The number of workpeople remaining on the Register at 10th December was 22,185, as compared with 21,185 on 12th November, and 49,237 on 11th December, 1914.

Vacancies Notified and Filled.—The number of vacancies notified to the Exchanges during the period was 59,912, a daily average of 2,496, as compared with 2,141 in the previous four weeks, and 2,042 in the four weeks ended 11th December, 1914. The number of

BOARD OF TRADE LABOUR EXCHANGES—FOUR WEEKS ENDED 10th DECEMBER, 1915. A.—INSURED TRADES.

Registrations and Vacancies Filled in the Four Weeks ended 10th December, 1915.

Table with 10 columns: Occupational Groups, On Register at Beginning of Period, Registrations during Period, On Register at End of Period, Vacancies Filled during Period, On Register at Beginning of Period, Registrations during Period, On Register at End of Period, Vacancies Filled during Period. Rows include Building, Construction of Works, Sawmilling, Shipbuilding, Mechanical Engineering, Making of Vehicles, and Grand Totals for Males and Females.

* Including cases in which persons who obtained employment during the period were re-registered on again becoming unemployed. † Occupations are grouped according to the industry with which they are mainly connected. ‡ These figures are mainly in respect of the Engineering and Vehicle trades.

B.—UNINSURED TRADES.

Registrations and Vacancies Filled in the Four Weeks ended 10th December, 1915.

Table with 14 columns: Occupational Groups, Men, Women, Total, Registrations during Period, On Register at End of Period, Vacancies Filled during Period, Boys, Girls, Total, Vacancies Filled during Period. Rows include Mining and Quarrying, Textile, Dress, Conveyance of Men, Goods, &c., Agriculture, Food, Tobacco, Drink and Lodging, Domestic, and Grand Totals.

* Including cases in which persons who obtained employment during the period were re-registered on again becoming unemployed. † Including 998 men provided for the Pioneer Battalion of the Royal Engineers, and for the Army Service Corps.

DISEASES OF OCCUPATIONS

IN FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

[Cases include all attacks, fatal or otherwise, reported to the Home Office during the month and not previously reported, so far as is known, during the preceding 12 months. Deaths include all fatal cases reported during the month whether included (as cases) in previous returns or not.]

The total number of cases of poisoning and of anthrax reported to the Home Office under the Factory and Workshop Act during December, 1915, was 39, of which 34 were due to lead poisoning, 1 to arsenic poisoning, and 4 to anthrax. One death due to lead poisoning was reported. In addition, 12 cases of lead poisoning (4 of which were fatal) were reported among painters and plumbers. During the year ended December, 1915, the total number of cases of poisoning and of anthrax reported under the Factory and Workshop Act was 443, compared with 511 during the corresponding period of 1914. The number of deaths in 1915 was 30, as compared with 36 in 1914. In addition, there were 127 cases of lead poisoning (including 37 deaths) among house painters and plumbers during the year 1915, as compared with 241 cases (including 39 deaths) during the year 1914.

ANALYSIS BY INDUSTRIES.

Table with 11 columns: Industry, Month of Dec., 1915, Dec., 1914, Year ended Dec., 1914, Month of Dec., 1915, Dec., 1914, Year ended Dec., 1914. Rows include AMONG OPERATIVES ENGAGED IN (Smelting of Metals, Brass Works, Sheet Lead and Lead Piping, etc.), LEAD POISONING, OTHER FORMS OF POISONING, ANTHRAX, and GRAND TOTAL.

* Of the three persons affected in the China and Earthenware industry two were females.

FATAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.

CASES REPORTED IN DECEMBER, 1915.

[Based on Home Office and Board of Trade Returns.]

The number of workpeople, exclusive of seamen, reported as killed in the course of their employment in December, 1915, was 347, an increase of 63 on a month ago, and of 56 on a year ago. The mean number for December during the five years 1910-1914 was 349, the maximum being 619 and the minimum 268.

Fatal accidents in the railway service during December, 1915, numbered 59, compared with 43 in November, 1915, and 44 in December, 1914.

The total number of fatal accidents at mines was 109, a decrease of 3 on a month ago, and an increase of 13 on a year ago. There were 6 fatal accidents at quarries compared with 7 a month ago and 11 a year ago.

The total number of fatal accidents reported under the Factory and Workshops Act in December was 173, an increase of 55 on November, 1915, and of 35 on December, 1914.

The total number of fatal accidents to seamen during December, 1915, was 228, a decrease of 22 on a month ago, and of 140 on a year ago.

The Table shows the number of workpeople reported as killed in the course of their employment during December, 1915, November, 1915, and December, 1914:—

Table with 6 columns: Trade, Number of Workpeople killed during Dec., 1915, Nov., 1915, Dec., 1914, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) in Dec., 1915, on a Month ago, Year ago. Rows include RAILWAY SERVICE, MINES, FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS, SEAMEN, and GRAND TOTAL.

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