

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

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 6.]

JUNE, 1925.

[PRICE SIXPENCE NET.]

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

EMPLOYMENT.

EMPLOYMENT showed little change, on the whole, during May. There was an improvement in the clothing and furnishing trades, but a further marked decline in the coal-mining industry.

Among the 11,500,000 workpeople insured against unemployment under the Unemployment Insurance Acts in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the percentage unemployed at 25th May, 1925, was 11·2, as compared with 11·2 at 27th April, 1925, and with 9·5 at 26th May, 1924. Among the members of those Trade Unions from which returns were received the percentage unemployed was 10·1 at the end of May, 1925, compared with 9·4 at the end of April, 1925, and with 7·0 at the end of May, 1924. The total number of persons registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland as unemployed at 25th May, 1925, was approximately 1,253,000, of whom 963,000 were men and 226,000 were women, the remainder being boys and girls; at 27th April, 1925, it was 1,251,000, of whom 948,000 were men and 231,000 were women; at 26th May, 1924, it was 1,057,000, of whom men numbered 786,000 and women 204,000.

Employment was good, on the whole, with coach-builders, upholsterers and brickmakers, with skilled operatives in the building trades, and in the tailoring and dressmaking trades; it was fairly good with cotton weavers, mill-sawyers, brushmakers, in the furnishing, silk and carpet trades, and in some sections of the printing and metal trades. In the wool textile industry, in coal mining, in the iron and steel industry, in tinsplate and steel-sheet manufacture, in the marine and heavy engineering trades, and in the shipbuilding industry, employment continued bad.

WAGES.

In the industries for which statistics are regularly compiled by the Department, the changes in rates of wages reported in May resulted in an aggregate reduction of £16,400 in the weekly full-time wages of over 500,000 workpeople and in an aggregate increase of £3,350 in the weekly wages of 36,000 workpeople.

The principal groups of workpeople whose wages were reduced were coal miners in Yorkshire and the East Midlands, where there was a slight decrease in the percentage addition to basis rates (amounting to 0·3 per cent. on current rates); and steel smelters and millmen in various districts in England and Scotland, whose wages were reduced by about 1 per cent. on current rates. Other important groups of workpeople whose wages were reduced included iron-ore miners in Cumberland, blastfurnacemen in Cumberland and Scotland, Siemens steel workers in South-West Wales, tinsplate makers in South Wales and Monmouthshire, electrical cable makers, hosiery workers at Hawick, coopers, furniture trade operatives in London, road transport workers in Scotland, leather belt and roller leather makers,

and workpeople employed in the non-trading services of most of the local authorities in London.

Among the workpeople who received increases in rates of wages were heating and domestic engineers, coal miners in the Radstock district, the lower-paid men in ironstone mines in Cleveland, and blastfurnacemen in Lincolnshire. There were also increases in the minimum rates fixed under the Trade Boards Acts for most classes of workpeople employed in the brush and broom trade.

During the first five months of 1925 the changes reported to the Department, in the industries for which statistics are compiled, have resulted in net increases amounting to £70,000 in the weekly full-time wages of over 700,000 workpeople and in net reductions of nearly £40,000 in those of nearly 690,000 workpeople. In the corresponding period of 1924 there were net increases of about £480,000 in the weekly full-time wages of 2,480,000 workpeople and net reductions of £13,500 in the weekly wages of nearly 250,000 workpeople.

COST OF LIVING.

At 2nd June the average level of retail prices of all the commodities taken into account in the statistics compiled by the Ministry of Labour (including food, rent, clothing, fuel, light, and miscellaneous items) was approximately 72 per cent. above that of July, 1914, as compared with 73 per cent. at 1st May. For food alone the corresponding percentages were 66 and 67 respectively. The fall in the percentages is mainly due to reductions in the prices of butter, milk and sugar in the food group and in the prices of coal.

These statistics are designed to indicate the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-war standard of living of working-class families. Accordingly, in making the calculations, the changes in the prices of the various items included are combined in proportions corresponding with the relative importance of those items in pre-war working-class family expenditure, no allowance being made for any changes in the standard of living.

TRADE DISPUTES.

The number of trade disputes involving stoppages of work reported to the Department as beginning in May was 47. In addition, 34 disputes which began before May were still in progress at the beginning of the month. The number of workpeople involved in all disputes in May (including workpeople thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, but not themselves parties to the disputes) was about 27,000; the estimated aggregate duration of all disputes during May was about 202,000 working days. These figures compare with totals of approximately 25,000 workpeople involved and 122,000 days lost in the previous month.

The aggregate duration of all disputes in progress in the first five months of 1925 was about 658,000 working days, and the total number of workpeople involved in these disputes was 102,000. The figures for the corresponding period of 1924 were 2,963,000 days and 356,000 workpeople, respectively.







WAGES IN GERMANY IN MARCH AND APRIL, 1925.

The issue of Wirtschaft und Statistik (the organ of the Federal Statistical Office) for the second half of May contains statistics of wages in certain important industries in March and April, 1925.

The hourly rates of wages of skilled and unskilled workers in the various industries are shown in the following Table:—

Table with 5 columns: Industry, Skilled Workers (Mar. 1925, Apr. 1925), Unskilled Workers (Mar. 1925, Apr. 1925). Rows include Mining, Building, Wood working, Metal, Textiles, etc.

THE COTTON INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES.

WAGES AND HOURS, 1912 TO 1924.†

The Federal Bureau of Labour Statistics, Washington, has recently completed an inquiry into wages and hours of labour in the cotton goods manufacturing industry of the United States.

The information given in the Table below shows, for 1924, the average full-time hours worked per week, and the average earnings per hour and per week.

Table with 10 columns: Occupation and Sex, Average Full-Time Hours per Week, Average Earnings per Hour, Index Numbers of Average Full-Time Earnings per Week (1913 = 100). Rows for Males, Females, and All Occupations.

The above Table shows that the full weekly earnings for the industry were 192 per cent. higher in 1924 than in 1913, that is, nearly three times as high, and 131 per cent. higher in 1924 than in 1913.

\* 100 pfennige = 1 Reichsmark = (approximately) 1s. † Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics, No. 371: Wages and Hours of Labour in Cotton Goods Manufacturing, 1924. ‡ Including occupations not shown in the Table.

TRADE UNIONS IN CANADA: LATEST STATISTICS.

The Fourteenth Annual Report on Labour Organisation in Canada, relating to the calendar year 1924, shows that the slight gain in trade union membership recorded for 1923 has been followed by a decline.

The report states that in 1911 there were 133,132 members in all labour organisations. At the close of 1913 the corresponding total was 175,799. During the following three years the membership fluctuated, but in 1917 rose to 204,630; the highest level reached was in 1919, when there were 378,047 trade unionists in Canada.

The following Table shows the number of members and local branches in the various groups of organisations in 1924:—

Table with 3 columns: Branches, Membership. Rows include International, Non-international, Independent Units, National and Catholic, Total.

According to the trades followed, the railway employees stand first with about 29 per cent. of the total; the building trades second with slightly over 10 per cent.; public employees, personal service and amusement trades third with rather less than 10 per cent.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR ESTABLISHED FOR SOUTH AFRICA.†

On the 24th July, 1924, a Ministry of Labour was established by the Government of the Union of South Africa. The new Department assumes several of the functions affecting labour which were exercised by various other departments.

The matters with which the new Ministry will be primarily concerned are the following:—(1) employment generally, including Government and relief works; (2) conciliation boards, industrial councils, the registration of trade unions and employers' organisations, private registry offices, etc.;

In order that the Ministry may get into effective touch with the views of people outside the range of its own machinery and personnel, an Advisory Council, representative of various national interests, has been appointed by the Minister of Labour to investigate and advise upon the problems of labour and unemployment.

The Ministry has also a local organisation. In eight of the principal centres of the Union—the Cape Peninsula, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, Durban, Witwatersrand, Pretoria and Bloemfontein—employment exchanges exist, each under the control of an Inspector of Labour.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The Advisory Council of the Ministry of Labour of the South African Government was recently charged with the consideration of the question of unemployment in the Union. The Committee appointed to deal with the matter has now presented its Report.†

\* That is, organisations having jurisdiction over the United States as well as Canada. † The Official Labour Gazette of the Union of South Africa, Vol. I., No. 1, April, 1925. Pretoria.

CHANGES IN COST OF LIVING: STATISTICS FOR 2nd JUNE.\*

Summary: Average Increases since July, 1914.

All Items included ... 72% Food only ... 66%

FOOD.

At 2nd June\* the average level of retail prices of the principal articles of food showed a slight decline as compared with that at 1st May. This decline was mainly attributable to reductions in the prices of butter, milk and sugar.

As a net result of all the changes recorded, the average increase over the level of July, 1914, in the retail prices (in Great Britain and Northern Ireland) of the articles of food included in these statistics was about 66 per cent. at 2nd June, as compared with about 67 per cent. at 1st May and 60 per cent. at the corresponding date in 1924.

In the following Table is given a comparison of retail prices of these articles of food in July, 1914, and at 1st May and 2nd June, 1925:—

Table with 6 columns: Article, Average Price (per lb. unless otherwise indicated— to the nearest 1d.), Average Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) at 2nd June, 1925, as compared with July, 1914, 1st May, 1925. Rows include Beef, Mutton, Flour, Bread, etc.

The following Table gives a percentage comparison of the level of retail prices at the same three dates:—

Table with 5 columns: Article, Average Percentage Increase at 2nd June, 1925, as compared with July, 1914. Rows include Beef, Mutton, Flour, Bread, etc.

\* As 1st June fell on Whit Monday, the statistics relate to 2nd June. † If this kind is seldom dealt with in a locality, the returns quote the price of another kind locally representative. ‡ The description of cheese specified for quotation is Canadian or American, but where such cheese is seldom sold in a locality the returns quote the price of another kind locally representative. § The decrease between 1st May and 2nd June was very small, but sufficient to lower the average as expressed to the nearest farthing. || Decrease of about 1d.

RENT, CLOTHING, FUEL AND LIGHT.

As regards rents, inquiries which have been made into the changes which have taken effect under the Rent and Mortgage Interest Restriction Acts indicate that the average increase in the rents of working-class dwellings between July, 1914, and 2nd June, 1925, was approximately 47 per cent.

As regards clothing, owing to the wide range of quotations, both now and before the war, to changes in qualities and in stocks held by retailers, and to variations in the extent to which different articles and qualities have been affected by price changes, it is impossible to make an exact calculation of the increase in prices; but information as to the movements of prices of men's suits and overcoats, underclothing and hosiery, textile materials and boots, received from retailers in the principal towns, indicates that at 2nd June the level of retail prices of articles in this group, taking goods of the kinds purchased by the working classes and so far as possible the same qualities of goods at each date, averaged about 130 per cent. higher than in July, 1914.

In the fuel and light group the retail price of coal was reduced in many districts; at 2nd June the average price was between 85 and 90 per cent. higher than in July, 1914. The price of gas remained about 50 per cent. above the pre-war level, and the prices of lamp oil, candles and matches also showed no appreciable change during the month.

ALL ITEMS.

If the average increases in the cost of all the foregoing items are combined in accordance with their relative importance in pre-war working-class family expenditure, allowance being also made for the increase in the prices of soap, soda, domestic ironmongery, brushware and pottery, tobacco, fares and newspapers (averaging about 80 per cent.), the resultant general average increase for 2nd June is, approximately, 72 per cent.† over the level of July, 1914, as compared with 73 per cent. at 1st May and 69 per cent. at the corresponding date in 1924.

The result of this calculation (in which the same quantities and, as far as possible, the same qualities of each item are taken in 1925 as in 1914) is to show the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-war standard of living of working-class families (i.e., the standard actually prevailing in working-class families before the war, irrespective of whether such standard was adequate or not). Owing to the variations in the amounts of increase in the prices of different commodities it is probable that economies or re-adjustments in expenditure have been effected in many families, especially in those cases where incomes have not increased so much as prices.

SUMMARY TABLE: 1915 TO 1925.

The following Table shows the average percentage increase as compared with July, 1914, for all items included in the statistics, at the beginning of each month since January, 1915:—

Table with 13 columns: Month (beginning of), 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925. Rows for January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December.

NOTE.

A brief Statement of the method of compiling these statistics was given on page 236 of the July, 1923, issue of this GAZETTE. A more detailed account was given in the issue of February, 1921.

\* See note \* in previous column. † If allowance is made for the changes in taxation on commodities since July, 1914, the average increase is about 2 per cent. less.











UNEMPLOYMENT IN INSURED INDUSTRIES.

THE statistics here presented show, industry by industry, the number of persons insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, and the number and percentage of such persons who were unemployed on 25th May, 1925. "Unemployed" as used in these statistics does not necessarily mean that the person is definitely without a job. Persons who on 25th May, 1925, were not at work because they were suspended, "stood off," "furloughed," or on short time, and whose unemployment books were lodged at Exchanges, are counted in the statistics as "unemployed."

Under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, substantially all employed persons, except outworkers and persons employed in agriculture and private domestic service, must be insured against unemployment. Every person so insured is given an Unemployment Book on which inter alia the industry of the employer has been recorded. Employees of local authorities, railways and certain other public utility undertakings, members of the police forces, and persons with rights under a statutory superannuation scheme, may, in certain circumstances, be excepted. Persons employed otherwise than by way of manual labour at a rate of remuneration exceeding in value £250 per annum are excepted, as are also juveniles under sixteen years of age.

The number of persons insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is estimated at approximately 11,514,000. This figure is computed annually, and is estimated from a count of the unemployment books which are exchanged annually. This annual exchange commences in the first week of July, but it is not until the end of September that the exchange of books is sufficiently near completion to allow of a satisfactory estimate being made. In making this annual estimate consideration is given not only to the actual number of books exchanged, but also to the number likely to be exchanged in the course of the insurance year.

Every insured person claiming unemployment benefit must lodge his unemployment book at an Employment Exchange when making a claim. It is possible therefore to obtain from a count of the lodged books a record of unemployment in insured trades. The figures given of numbers unemployed are not, however, confined to persons in receipt of benefit. They include:—

(a) Insured persons, unemployed and in receipt of benefit;

(b) Insured persons not in receipt of benefit, but known to be unemployed by reason of their maintaining registration at an Employment Exchange or otherwise;

(c) Insured persons who are not in receipt of benefit and are not maintaining registration, but whose unemployment books remain lodged at Employment Exchanges. Provided there is no definite evidence of employment these are counted in the statistics for two months after the insured person's last attendance at an Exchange.

Insured persons who are disqualified for the receipt of benefit under the trade dispute disqualification are not included amongst the numbers unemployed.

In July, 1923, the classification of insured workpeople was revised so as to bring it, so far as practicable, into conformity with the industrial grouping adopted in connection with the 1921 census of population. At the same time the classification was put on a strictly industrial basis, all unemployment books being classified according to the industry of the employer, or, in the case of unemployed persons, of the last employer. Consequently the statistics of unemployment industry by industry subsequent to June, 1923, are not strictly comparable with those prior to that date.

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES UNEMPLOYED.

Table with multiple columns: INDUSTRY, ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INSURED PERSONS AT JULY, 1924 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL), NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYMENT BOOKS REMAINING LODGED AT 25TH MAY, 1925 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL), PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 25TH MAY, 1925 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL), INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) AS COMPARED WITH 27TH APRIL, 1925 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL).

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES UNEMPLOYED.

Table with multiple columns: INDUSTRY, ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INSURED PERSONS AT JULY, 1924 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL), NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYMENT BOOKS REMAINING LODGED AT 25TH MAY, 1925 (MALES, FEMALES, TOTAL), PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED AT 25TH MAY, 1925 (Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Great Britain only, Males, Females, Total), INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) AS COMPARED WITH 27TH APRIL, 1925 (Males, Females, Total).





PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING MAY, 1925 (continued).

Table with columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes sections for OTHER METAL TRADES, TEXTILE TRADES, CLOTHING TRADES, FOOD, DRINK, AND TOBACCO TRADES.

\* The Grades are as follows: Grade A.—London; Grade B.—Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge and Walsall, and all towns between; together with the Potteries district, Stafford, Coventry, Rugby, Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent and Leicester; Lancashire and Cheshire; Newcastle-on-Tyne; Scarborough; Grade C.—Parts of Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire not included above; and Leeds, Sheffield, Cardiff and Bristol; Grade D.—All other districts.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING MAY, 1925 (continued).

Table with columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes sections for WOODWORKING AND FURNITURE TRADES, PAPER, PRINTING, AND ALLIED TRADES, BUILDING AND ALLIED TRADES, TRANSPORT TRADES, PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES, MISCELLANEOUS TRADES.

\* The change took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour cost-of-living index number. † At Burton-on-Trent the rate for those at block and on unions and pressure work is 1s. 7d. per hour, and for vat makers 1s. 8d.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING MAY, 1925 (continued).

Table with 5 columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes entries for Basket makers, Brush and Broom, etc.

TRADE DISPUTES.†

Number, Magnitude and Duration.—The number of trade disputes involving a stoppage of work, reported to the Department as beginning in May in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was 47, as compared with 44 in the previous month and 56 in May, 1924.

The following Table analyses the disputes in progress in May in Great Britain and Northern Ireland by groups of industries :—

Table with 5 columns: Groups of Industries, Started before 1st May, Started in May, Total, Number of Disputes in progress in May, Aggregate Duration in Working Days of all Disputes in progress in May.

Causes.—Of the 47 disputes beginning in May, 8, directly involving 4,000 workpeople, arose out of proposed reductions in wages; 14, directly involving 1,000 workpeople, on other wages questions; 6, directly involving 3,000 workpeople, on details of working arrangements; 10, directly involving 6,000 workpeople, on

questions of Trade Union principle; and 9, directly involving 2,000 workpeople, on other questions.

Results.—Settlements were effected in the case of 27 new disputes, directly involving 10,000 workpeople, and 18 old disputes, directly involving 3,000 workpeople. Of these new and old disputes, 11, directly involving 5,000 workpeople, were settled in favour of the workpeople; 13, directly involving 3,000 workpeople, in favour of the employers; and 21, directly involving 5,000 workpeople, were compromised. In the case of 3 disputes, directly involving 3,000 workpeople, work was resumed pending negotiations.

TOTALS FOR FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1924 AND 1925.‡

Table with 6 columns: Groups of Industries, No. of Disputes, Number of Workpeople involved in all Disputes in progress, Aggregate Duration in Working Days of all Disputes in progress, No. of Disputes, Number of Workpeople involved in all Disputes in progress, Aggregate Duration in Working Days of all Disputes in progress.

PRINCIPAL TRADE DISPUTES IN PROGRESS DURING MAY, 1925.

Table with 7 columns: Occupations and Locality, Approximate Number of Workpeople Involved, Date when Dispute Began, Date when Dispute Ended, Cause or Object, Result.

\* The change took effect under an arrangement whereby wages fluctuate in correspondence with the Ministry of Labour cost-of-living index number. † Excluding those aged 16-17, 17-18, for whom there was no change. ‡ 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.

DISEASES OF OCCUPATIONS.\*

The total number of cases† of poisoning, anthrax and epitheliomatous and chrome ulceration in Great Britain and Northern Ireland reported under the Factory and Workshop Act during May, 1925, was 50. Eight deaths‡ were reported during the month, four due to epitheliomatous ulceration, three due to lead poisoning and one due to anthrax.

(a) CASES OF LEAD POISONING.

Table with 2 columns: Among Operatives engaged in, Cases. Includes Smelting of Metals, Plumbing and Soldering, Shipbreaking, etc.

(c) CASES OF ANTHRAX.

Table with 2 columns: Cases. Includes Wool, Handling of Horsehair, Handling and Sorting of Hides and Skins, etc.

(d) CASES OF EPITHELIOMATOUS ULCERATION.

Table with 2 columns: Cases. Includes Pitch, Tar, Paraffin, Oil, etc.

(e) CASES OF CHROME ULCERATION.

Table with 2 columns: Cases. Includes Manufacture of Bichromates, Dyeing and Finishing, Chrome Tanning, etc.

(b) CASES OF OTHER FORMS OF POISONING.

Table with 2 columns: Cases. Includes HOUSE PAINTING AND PLUMBING, etc.

POOR LAW RELIEF IN GREAT BRITAIN.

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

The number of persons\* relieved on one day† in May, 1925, in the thirty-one selected areas named below, was 693,069, or 2.9 per cent. less than in the previous month, and 11.1 per cent. less than in May, 1924.

Table with 6 columns: Selected Urban Areas, Indoor, Outdoor, Total, Number of Persons in receipt of Poor Law Relief on one day† in May, 1925, Rate per 10,000 of Estimated Population, Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in rate per 10,000 of Population as compared with a Month ago, Year ago.

FATAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.‡

The number of workpeople, other than seamen, reported as killed in the course of their employment in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during May, 1925, was 193, as compared with 188 in the previous month and with 236 a year ago.

Table with 2 columns: RAILWAY SERVICE, FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS. Includes Brakesmen and Goods Guards, Engine Drivers, Firemen, etc.

ASSISTED PASSAGES UNDER THE EMPIRE SETTLEMENT ACT, 1922.

The number of assisted passages granted during May, 1925, in connection with agreed schemes under the Empire Settlement Act, and the total number of such passages granted from the inception of these schemes, together with the number of departures during the same periods, are shown in the following Table :—

Table with 5 columns: Assisted Passage Schemes, Assisted Passages Granted in May, 1925, Total Assisted Passages Granted, Departures in May, 1925, Total Departures.

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

\* Based on Returns from the Home Office and from the Ministry of Labour for Northern Ireland. † Cases include all attacks reported 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.











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## H.M. OFFICE OF WORKS.

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## CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES.

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

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