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

EMPLOYMENT.

FOLLOWING the sharp decline which occurred immediately after Christmas, employment showed a steady improvement, on the whole, throughout January. At the end of the month, however, employment in most industries remained worse than in the third week of December. There was a further seasonal decline in the building trade, in public works contracting, and in their ancillary industries of brick, tile and cement manufacture. In a number of other industries, including most of the textile and clothing trades, food, drink and tobacco manufacture, the saw-milling, furniture, and other woodworking trades, and the miscellaneous metal industries, employment at the end of January was also below the level recorded immediately before Christmas. In coal-mining there was an increase in the numbers of workpeople temporarily stopped from the service of their employers. On the other hand, there was a slight improvement in employment in the cotton textile industry, in the pottery trade, in hat and cap manufacture, and in ship-repairing.

Among the workpeople (aged 16 to 64 inclusive and numbering approximately 11,800,000) insured against unemployment under the Unemployment Insurance Acts in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the percentage unemployed (including those temporarily stopped as well as those wholly unemployed), in all industries taken together, was 10·7 at 23rd January, 1928, as compared with 9·8 at 19th December, 1927, and 12·0 at 24th January, 1927.

The percentage wholly unemployed was 8·3 at 23rd January, 1928, as compared with 7·7 at 19th December, 1927; while the percentage temporarily stopped was 2·4, as compared with 2·1. The total number of applicants for employment registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland at 30th January, 1928, was approximately 1,199,000,* of whom 949,000 were men and 171,000 were women, the remainder being boys and girls. At 19th December, 1927, it was 1,127,000, of whom 925,000 were men and 151,000 were women; and at 31st January, 1927, it was 1,375,000, of whom 1,083,000 were men and 213,000 were women.

WAGES.

In the industries for which statistics are regularly compiled by the Department, the changes in wages reported to have come into operation during January resulted in a net reduction of £16,350 in the weekly full-time wages of about 245,000 workpeople, and in an increase of nearly £9,000 in those of nearly 150,000 workpeople.

The largest group of workpeople affected by reductions were coal miners in Yorkshire, in whose case the percentage addition to basis rates was reduced by an amount equivalent to about 3 per cent. on current

wages. There were also reductions in the wages of iron miners and blastfurnace workers in Cleveland and Cumberland, shale miners and shale-oil workers in Scotland, iron puddlers and millmen in the North of England and West of Scotland, and textile bleachers, dyers, etc., in Scotland. Lower rates of pay were introduced for new entrants in the case of certain classes of railway traffic workers in Northern Ireland.

Textile bleachers, dyers, etc., in Yorkshire and Lancashire received small increases under cost-of-living sliding scales (less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on current wages in Yorkshire, and 3d. and 2d. per week for men and women respectively in Lancashire), and men employed by electricity supply undertakings received an increase of 1d. per hour in most districts in Great Britain outside the North-East Coast and East Midlands areas of England. Increases also occurred under cost-of-living sliding scales in the wages of bobbin and shuttle makers in England and Wales, waterworks employees in various districts in England, felt hat makers, seed crushers and oil millers, and men employed by public works contractors in London.

COST OF LIVING.

At 1st February 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 and light, and miscellaneous items) was approximately 66 per cent. above that of July, 1914, as compared with 68 per cent. a month ago, and 72 per cent. a year ago. For food alone the corresponding percentage for 1st February was 59, as compared with 62 per cent. a month ago and 64 per cent. a year ago.

The fall in these percentages as compared with a month ago was mainly due to decreases in the average prices of eggs and of butter.

These statistics are designed to indicate the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre-war standard of living of working-class families, and accordingly, in making the calculations, the changes in the prices of the various items included are combined in proportions corresponding with the relative importance of those items in pre-war working-class family expenditure, 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 January was 31. In addition, 10 disputes which began before January were still in progress at the beginning of the month. The number of workpeople involved in all disputes in January (including workpeople thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, but not themselves parties to the disputes) was about 10,000; and the aggregate duration of all disputes during January was about 50,000 working days. These figures compare with totals of 7,600 workpeople involved and 38,000 working days lost in the previous month, and with 15,300 workpeople involved and 130,000 days lost in January, 1927.

* See footnote * on page 63.

NUMBERS INSURED AND PERCENTAGES UNEMPLOYED.

Table with columns for Industry, Estimated Number of Insured Persons Aged 16-64 Inclusive at July, 1927, Percentage Unemployed at 23rd January, 1928, and Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Total Percentages as compared with 19th, 24th, and 25th Jan., 1928.

Table titled 'GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND' showing data for various industries including Food, Drink and Tobacco, Sawmilling, Printing and Paper Trades, Building and Construction of Works, etc. Columns include Males, Females, Total, and various percentages.

WORK OF EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES.

At 30th January, 1928, the number of persons on the registers of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain was 1,168,941; in Great Britain and Northern Ireland it was 1,199,086. Statistics for men, boys, women and girls, are given below:—

Table showing work of employment exchanges with columns for Persons normally in regular employment, Wholly Unemployed, Persons normally in casual employment, and Vacancies Filled. It includes sub-tables for Great Britain and Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

* It is estimated that, owing to the operation of the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925, about 25,000 persons aged 55 and over have ceased to register at the Employment Exchanges since 2nd January, 1928. Of this total, it may be assumed that a certain number have retired from work, but statistics as to this number are not available.

The following Table shows for each of the Employment Exchange administrative areas, and for the principal towns therein, the number of persons registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 30th January, 1928.

Table showing the number of persons registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 30th January, 1928, categorized by area and sex.

[Percentage rates of unemployment, for each of 653 towns in Great Britain, are given in the monthly "Local Unemployment Index"—see Advertisement pages of this GAZETTE.]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATISTICS: GREAT BRITAIN.

COMPOSITION OF STATISTICS.

ON page 60 an explanation is given of the unemployment statistics published weekly in the Press, and monthly in this GAZETTE. The following Table gives figures relating to the 23rd January, 1928, for the total of each group included in these statistics.

Table showing the composition of unemployment statistics for Great Britain, categorized by sex and age group.

CLAIMS TO EXTENDED BENEFIT.

Claims to "extended" benefit—i.e., benefit beyond that to which the claimant is entitled in respect of contributions paid—are submitted to Local Committees, composed, in the main, of representatives of employers and workpeople.

The following Table gives an analysis of the recommendations of these Committees in Great Britain during the period 13th December, 1927 to 16th January, 1928 :-

Table showing the analysis of recommendations of Local Committees in Great Britain during the period 13th December, 1927 to 16th January, 1928, categorized by type of claim and recommendation.

UNEMPLOYMENT FUND.

During the four weeks ended 28th January, 1928, the receipts and payments of the Unemployment Fund were approximately as shown in the following Table :-

Table showing the receipts and payments of the Unemployment Fund during the four weeks ended 28th January, 1928.

* Includes refunds at age 60 and compensation for the abolition thereof, cost of administration, interest on Treasury advances (paid 30th June and 31st December), etc.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES AND HOURS OF LABOUR.

Rates of Wages.

In the industries covered by the Department's statistics* the changes in rates of wages reported to have come into operation in January in Great Britain and Northern Ireland resulted in a net reduction of £16,350 in the weekly full-time wages of about 245,000 workpeople, and in an increase of nearly £9,000 in those of nearly 150,000 workpeople.

The groups of industries principally affected were as shown below :-

Table showing the approximate number of workpeople affected and the net amount of changes in weekly wages for various groups of industries.

The principal reduction in the mining group affected coal miners in Yorkshire, in whose case, owing to the adoption of a new minimum, the percentage payable on basis rates was reduced from 36 to 32, equivalent to a reduction of about 3 per cent. on current wages.

In the metal industries blastfurnace workers in Cleveland sustained a reduction of nearly 2½ per cent. on current wages, and those in the West of Scotland, except the lower-paid men, a reduction of nearly 2½ per cent. on current wages.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING JANUARY, 1928.

Table showing principal changes in rates of wages reported during January, 1928, categorized by industry, locality, date of change, and particulars of change.

* The particulars of numbers affected and amount of change in weekly wages exclude changes affecting Government employees, agricultural labourers, shop assistants and clerks, for which classes the information available is not sufficient to form a basis for statistics.

S.W.—**Engine Tyres**: Cammell, Laird & Co., Ltd., Sheffield.—**E.T.S. Apparatus**: The Railway Signal Co., Ltd., Liverpool.—**Fishbolts**: Nuts & Bolts, Ltd., Darlaston, Staffs.—**Flannel**: Radcliffe & Co., Rochdale.—**Freighters**: Shelvoke & Drewry, Ltd., Letchworth, Herts.—**Furniture**: W. Birch, Ltd., London, N.W.—**Ground Frames**: The Westinghouse Brake & Saxby Signal Co., London, N.—**Guns**: W. W. Greener, Ltd., Birmingham.—**Iron Culverts**: Wall's, Ltd., Birmingham.—**Iron Poles**: J. Spencer & Co., Wednesbury, Staffs.—**Isal**: Newton Chambers & Co., Ltd., Thorncliffe, Sheffield.—**Lifts**: Marryat & Scott, Ltd., London, E.C.; Waygood-Otis, Ltd., London, E.C.—**Light Railway Truck**: F. Theakston, Ltd., London, S.W.—**Loco. Spares**: Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth & Co., Ltd., Newcastle-on-Tyne; The North British Loco. Co., Glasgow.—**Lorries**: Morris Commercial Cars, Ltd., Birmingham.—**Machines**: Winget (1924), Ltd., London, S.W.—**Milling Machine**: J. Archdale & Co., Ltd., Birmingham.—**Mooring Materials**: Brown Lenox & Co., Ltd., Pontypridd, S. Wales.—**Oil**: J. L. Seaton & Co., Ltd., Sulcoates, Hull; Vacuum Oil Co., Ltd., London, S.W.—**Oil Gas Plant**: Mansfield & Sons, Ltd., Birkenhead.—**Paint**: Torbay Paint Co., Ltd., London, E.C.—**Paper**: J. Dickinson & Co., Ltd., London, E.C.—**Pipes**: Cochrane & Co., Middlesbrough; Staveley Coal & Iron Co., Hollingwood, near Chesterfield; Stewarts & Lloyds, Ltd., Birmingham.—**Printing Machines**: Harrild & Sons, Ltd., London, E.C.; Linotype & Machinery, Ltd., London, W.C.—**Pumps**: J. Evans & Sons (Wolverhampton), Ltd., Wolverhampton.—**Rails and Fishplates**: Cargo Fleet Iron Co., Ltd., Middlesbrough; W. Beardmore & Co., Glasgow.—**Sealing Wax**: G. Waterston & Sons, Ltd., London, E.C.—**Sleeping Saloons**: Gloucester Rly. Carr. & Wgn. Co., Ltd., Gloucester.—**Slipway Machinery**: Day, Summers & Co., Ltd., Southampton.—**Spares for Couplers**: The A.B.C. Coupler & Engg. Co., London, S.W.—**Spares for "Sir John Coode"**: W. Simons & Co., Ltd., Renfrew, N.B.—**Spares for "Sir William Matthews"**: Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley.—**Sprayers**: Four Oaks Spraying Machine Co., Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham.—**Springs**: J. Woodhead & Sons, Ltd., Leeds.—**Stationery**: Waterlow & Sons, Ltd., London, E.C.—**Steam Rollers**: Aveling & Porter, Ltd., Rochester, Kent.—**Steel Gates**: F. Morton & Co., Ltd., Garston, Liverpool.—**Steel Poles**: The British Mannesmann Tube Co., London, E.C.—**Steel Sheets**: F. Braby & Co., Ltd., London, E.C.; The Wolverhampton Corr. Iron Co., Ellesmere Port, near Birkenhead.—**Steel Sleepers**: The Anderston Foundry Co., Middlesbrough; Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds, Ltd., London, E.C.—**Steel Windows**: The Crittall Manufacturing Co., London, W.C.—**Steelwork**: Braithwaite & Co., Engineers, Ltd., London, S.W.; The Darlington Forge, Ltd., Darlington; P. & W. Maclellan, Ltd., Glasgow; A. & J. Main & Co., Ltd., London, W.C.; Motherwell Bridge Building Co., Ltd., Motherwell.—**Switches and Crossings**: The Isca Foundry Co., Newport, Mon.; Patent Shaft & Axletree Co., Ltd., London, S.W.—**Tanks**: Brown Lenox & Co. (London), Ltd., London, E.—**Telegraph Line Materials**: Bullers, Ltd., London, E.C.; Siemens Bros. & Co., London, S.E.—**Telephone Materials**: Ericsson's Telephones, London, W.C.; Peel Conner Telephone Works, Ltd., London, W.C.—**Testing Machine**: Macklow-Smith, London, S.W.—**Timber**: C. Leary & Co., London, E.C.—**Timber Testing Machines**: J. Buckton & Co., Leeds.—**Tools**: V. & R. Blakemore, London, E.C.; Buck & Hickman, Ltd., London, E.—**Tubes**: Grice, Grice & Son, Ltd., Birmingham; The Yorkshire Copper Works, Ltd., Leeds.—**Turning Machine**: Craven Bros. (Manchester), Ltd., Reddish, Stockport.—**Wagons**: The Midland Rly. Carr. & Wagon Co., Ltd., Birmingham.—**Waterworks Material**: Stanton Ironworks Co., Ltd., near Nottingham.—**Wire**: Shropshire Iron Co., Ltd., Hadley, near Wellington, Salop; F. Smith & Co., Salford, Manchester; The Whitecross Co., Ltd., Warrington.—**Wireless Apparatus**: Radio Communication Co., London, W.C.—**Wheels and Axles**: Miller & Co., Edinburgh.—**White Metal**: The Phosphor Bronze Co., London, S.E.

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