

THE
MINISTRY OF LABOUR
GAZETTE

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

VOL. XXXV.—No. 1.]

JANUARY, 1927.

[PRICE SIXPENCE NET.

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

EMPLOYMENT.

WITH the resumption of work at the coal mines there was an improvement in employment in nearly all the principal industries during the first three weeks of December. In iron-mining, at coke-ovens, in the iron, steel, and tinplate industries, and in railway carriage and wagon building (all of which had been specially affected by the coal-mining stoppage), there were substantial reductions in the proportions of workpeople unemployed. Considerable improvements were also recorded in the cotton industry, in the railway service, and in brick manufacture. As usual, however, there was a seasonal decline in employment after Christmas.

Among the workpeople (numbering approximately 12,000,000) insured against unemployment under the Unemployment Insurance Acts in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the percentage unemployed at 20th December, 1926, was 11·9* as compared with 13·5* at 22nd November, 1926, and 10·4 at 21st December, 1925. Among the members of those trade unions from which returns were received, the percentage unemployed was 12·2 at the end of December, 1926, as compared with 13·2 at the end of November, 1926, and with 11·0 at the end of December, 1925. The total number of applicants for employment registered at Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland at 20th December, 1926, was approximately 1,357,000, of whom 1,075,000 were men and 222,000 were women, the remainder being boys and girls; at 29th November, 1926, it was 1,545,000, of whom 1,206,000 were men and 265,000 were women; and at 21st December, 1925, it was 1,166,000, of whom 933,000 were men and 183,000 were women. The figures relating to 29th November, 1926, and those for 20th December, 1926, are exclusive of workpeople in the coal-mining industry who were disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute.

WAGES.

In the industries for which statistics are regularly compiled by the Department, the changes in wages reported to have come into operation during December resulted in an increase of about £20,000 in the weekly full-time wages of nearly 150,000 workpeople and in a reduction of £4,650 in those of 24,000 workpeople. (These figures are exclusive of changes in the wages of coal miners in certain districts which were reported last month as taking effect early in December and were included in the statistics for November, published in the last month's issue of this GAZETTE.)

The increases in the wages of coal miners included in the above figures occurred in the Forest of Dean, South

* These percentages include coal mining, but in respect of that industry only those unemployed persons who were not disqualified for benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Acts by reason of the dispute are taken into account. In other industries (excluding coal mining) the percentage of unemployment at 20th December was 12·1, as compared with 14·1 at 22nd November, 1926.

Staffordshire, and Warwickshire districts. Other groups of workpeople whose wages were increased in December included iron puddlers and iron and steel millmen in the Midlands, electrical cable makers, steel sheet millmen and galvanisers and blastfurnacemen in Cumberland.

The principal groups of workpeople affected by reductions included in the above figures were coal miners in the Bristol and North Wales districts, iron-ore miners in Cumberland, and railway traffic workers in Northern Ireland.

The changes in wages so far reported to the Department for the year 1926, in the industries for which statistics are compiled, have resulted in net increases of nearly £120,000 in the weekly full-time wages of nearly 420,000 workpeople and in net reductions of over £81,000 in those of about 740,000 workpeople. In 1925, there were net increases of over £80,000 in the weekly full-time wages of about 870,000 workpeople, and net reductions of nearly £160,000 in those of 850,000 workpeople.

COST OF LIVING.

At 1st January 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 75 per cent. above that of July, 1914, as compared with 79 per cent. a month earlier and 75 per cent. a year ago. For food alone the average percentage increase over the pre-war level declined from 69 per cent. at 1st December to 67 per cent. at 1st January, but the greater part of the decline in the general average was due to the reductions in the prices of coal during December.

TRADE DISPUTES.

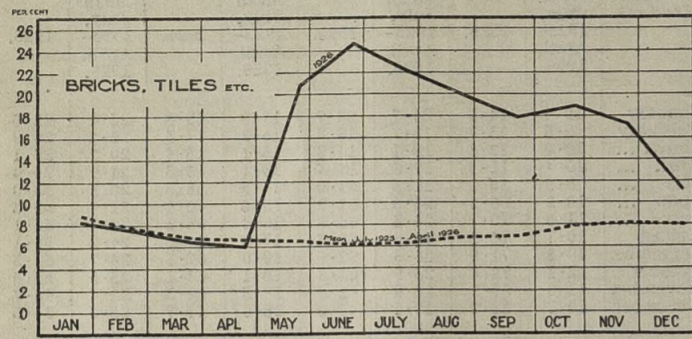
At the beginning of December about 450,000 workpeople in the coal-mining industry continued to be involved in the stoppage of work which began on 1st May. During the first three weeks of December the majority of these workpeople resumed work, the date of resumption varying in different cases. The aggregate number of working days lost by workpeople taking part in this dispute was about three million in December, making a total of nearly 146 million days lost during the whole period of the stoppage.

Apart from the coal-mining dispute, the number of trade disputes, involving stoppages of work, reported to the Department as in progress in December, was 15. The total number of workpeople involved in these disputes (including those thrown out of work at the establishments where the disputes occurred, though not themselves parties to the disputes) was about 3,000, and the estimated aggregate duration of such disputes in December was about 14,000 working days.

During the whole of 1926, 313 disputes causing a stoppage of work were reported to the Department. These disputes involved about 2½ million workpeople in a loss of nearly 163 million working days. Almost the whole of this loss was due to the coal-mining dispute and the general strike.

at 21st June. From that date it steadily declined until at 22nd November it stood at 17.3 per cent. By 20th December it had fallen further to 11.2 per cent.

DIAGRAM 6.



The percentage figures represented in this diagram are as follows :-

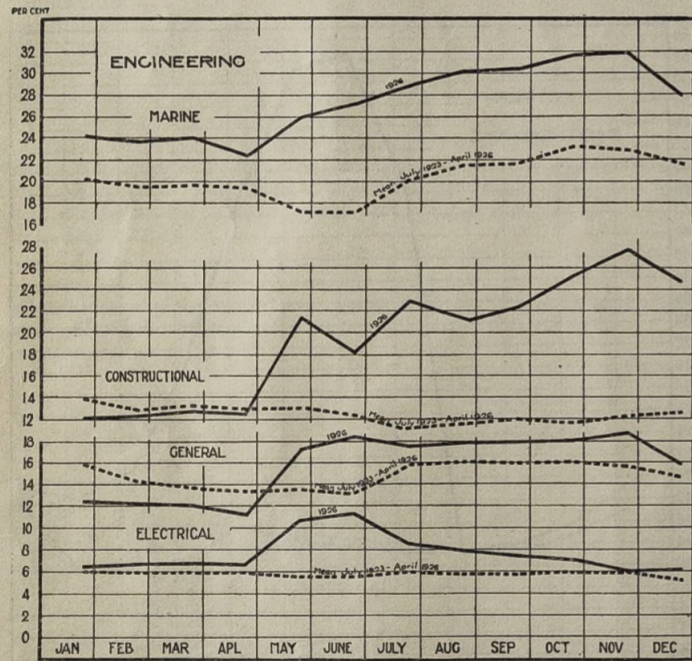
Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

It will be seen that the monthly percentages in normal times have a seasonal trend somewhat similar to that experienced by the building industry, but this was reversed by the results of the coal mining stoppage.

Engineering.—The engineering industry (exclusive of motors) is divided for purposes of classification into the four constituent parts: Constructional Engineering; Marine Engineering; General Engineering (including engineers' iron and steel founding); and Electrical Engineering.

The following diagram indicates the course of unemployment in each of the four sections :-

DIAGRAM 7.



The percentages represented in this diagram are as follows :-

Table with columns for Marine, Constructional, General, and Electrical, with sub-columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926 and Mean July 1923-1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

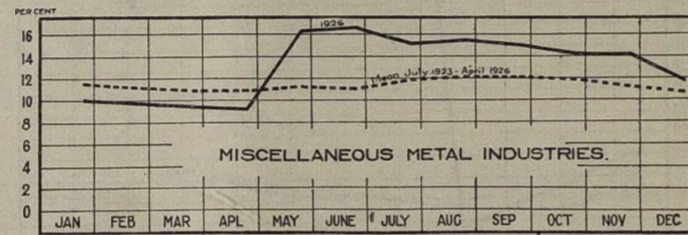
Constructional engineering uses large quantities of steel, and, as might be expected, it suffered most in consequence of the curtailment of supplies through the coal-mining stoppage. The percentage rate

of unemployment in this section of the industry rose from 12.5 at 26th April to 21.4 at 24th May, and, with slight fluctuations in June and August, it continued to rise until, at 22nd November, it reached 27.6 per cent. At 20th December it had fallen to 24.6 per cent.

The statistics of unemployment show that the engineering industry as a whole was not so seriously affected as any of those mentioned in the earlier part of this analysis.

Miscellaneous Metal Industries.—For the purpose of this survey the following industries have been grouped under this heading:—Manufacture of brass, copper, zinc, etc.; electrical cables, wire, etc.; hand tools, cutlery, etc.; iron and steel tubes; wire, wire netting and wire rope; bolts, nuts, screws, etc.; heating and ventilating engineering; brass and allied metal wares founding and "other" miscellaneous metal industries.

DIAGRAM 8.



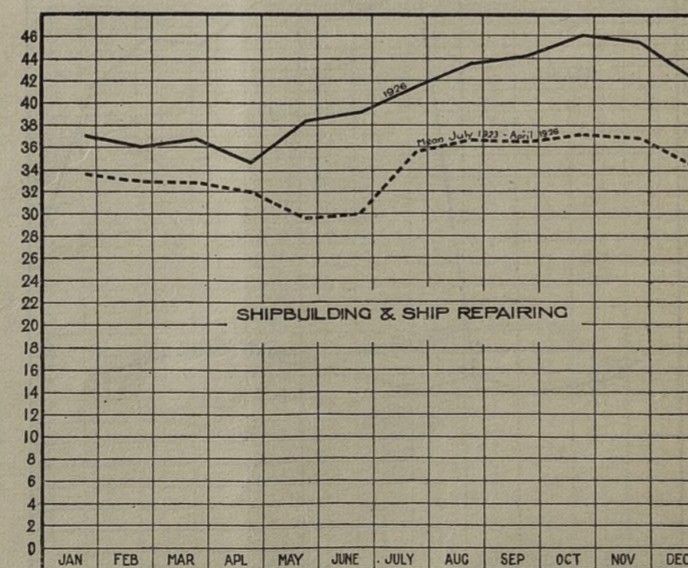
The percentages represented in this diagram are as follows :-

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

The effect of the coal stoppage on the motor industry was less pronounced. The percentage rate of unemployment rose from 5.8 at 26th April to 10.0 at 24th May and 11.4 at 21st June. Thereafter it fluctuated until, at 22nd November, it had fallen to 9.4. At 20th December it stood at 8.5 per cent.

The Shipbuilding industry (as well as Marine Engineering) had been suffering acute depression for some years before the coal mining dispute arose, and although the industry uses large quantities of iron and steel, the experience of the past eight months shows that the coal-mining dispute did not immediately lead to any considerable increase in unemployment. The tendency, however, was for the percentage rate of unemployment in shipbuilding to rise steadily from May to October. There was a slight recovery in November, which was accelerated in December.

DIAGRAM 9.

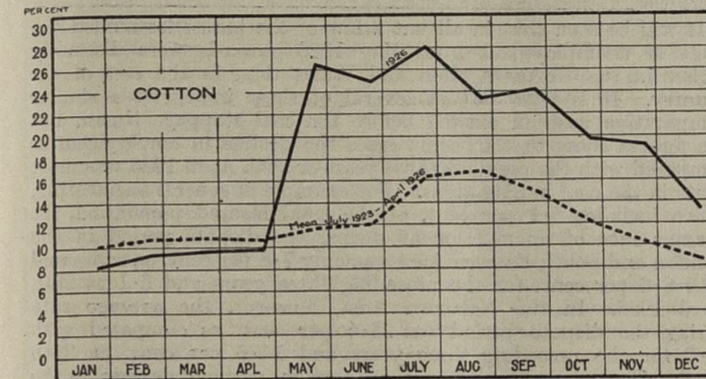


The following Table gives the percentages represented in this diagram :-

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

Textiles.—Both the cotton and wool textile industries experienced heavy increases in unemployment in May. In the cotton industry the percentage rate of unemployment at 26th April was 9.8; by 24th May it had risen to 26.6 per cent. There was a slight improvement in June among those temporarily stopped, but at 26th July the total percentage had risen to 28.0.

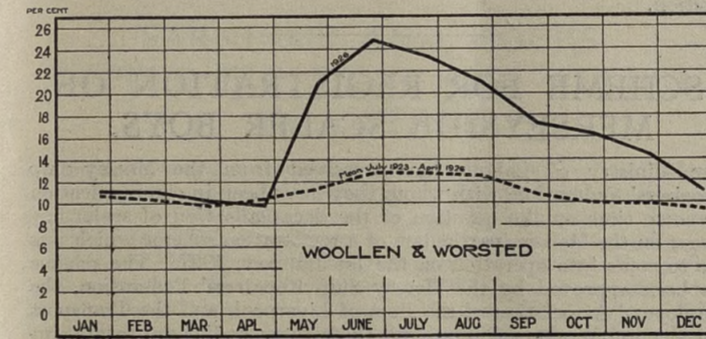
DIAGRAM 10.



The percentages represented in this diagram are as follows :-

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

DIAGRAM 11.



The percentages represented in this diagram are as follows :-

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

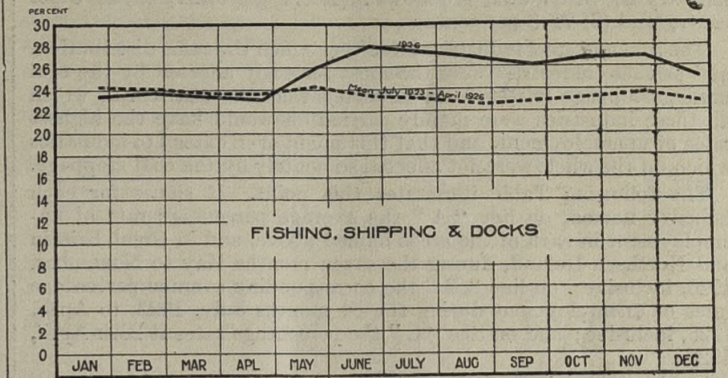
Employment in the silk industry (including artificial silk) was not so seriously affected by the coal stoppage. This is one of the smaller textile industries as regards numbers employed. The unemployment percentage rose from 7.1 at 26th April to 15.6 at 24th May, but by 21st June it had fallen to 11.8. It fluctuated around this figure until 25th October, when it fell to 10.3.

Fishing, Shipping and Docks.—These three industries together include over 345,000 insured persons. The percentage rate of unemployment had been high for some time before the coal stoppage began and the immediate effect of the stoppage was not pronounced. The activity in these industries is not necessarily dependent on supplies of British coal, and the import of foreign coal on a large scale took the place to some extent of the normal coal export trade.

cent. by 21st June. Thereafter it declined steadily to 26.1 at 20th September and then rose slightly to 26.9 at 25th October and 27.0 at 22nd November. At 20th December it had again fallen to 25.2 per cent.

It is clear that the effects of the coal stoppage were not sufficient to overcome entirely the usual seasonal movement in this group of industries.

DIAGRAM 12.



The following Table gives the percentages represented in this diagram :-

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

The foregoing survey includes all the most important industries which were adversely affected by the coal-mining stoppage. In certain other industries, such as the wood-working group; watches, clocks, plate, jewellery, etc.; musical instruments; the paper and paper board and printing industries; and miscellaneous mining and quarrying there was a general increase of unemployment during May (which may have been partly due to the general strike), followed by a steady fall until at 20th November the numbers unemployed were little, if any, greater than at 26th April.

In the rubber industry the increase in unemployment continued until 21st June, and in the following months there was a general improvement which, however, left the position worse at the end of November than at the end of April.

The industries engaged in the manufacture of clothing, food and drink were little affected by the stoppage. In the clothing group the downward seasonal trend of unemployment in the early part of the year was reversed during May by an increase of 4.6 per cent. in the unemployment rate as compared with April, but it was again evident by the end of June. From that point the upward seasonal trend was resumed.

In the food and drink industries the seasonal trend usually reaches its lowest point towards the end of July. In this group also this movement was arrested during May by an increase of 1.8 per cent. over April, but there was an improvement in June followed by a fluctuating, but on the whole, slightly upward, tendency in the following months.

The experience in the distributive trades was similar. Here the increase in May as compared with April amounted to no more than 1.1 per cent. in the rate of unemployment and the figure remained practically stationary during the remainder of 1926, with a decline in December due to Christmas trade. At 20th December the percentage rate of unemployment in this industry was 6.0.

It is of interest to observe that the gas, water and electricity industries were little affected by the coal stoppage. During the first four months of 1926 the percentage rate of unemployment in these industries taken as a whole fell from 6.0 to 5.2. At 24th May the rate rose to 5.8 per cent. and to 6.2 per cent. at 21st June. It fell to 5.9 per cent. at 26th July and thereafter rose by 0.1 per cent. each month, until at 22nd November it stood at 6.3 per cent. At 20th December it had fallen to 5.9 per cent. Large quantities of coal were imported during the period of the dispute.

The experience in the building and public works contracting industries was very similar to that in the other seasonal industries such as food and clothing, and neither of these industries was seriously affected by the coal stoppage.

The following Table indicates the course of unemployment in all industries taken together, other than the following: coal mining; coke ovens and by-product works; iron-ore mining; pig iron; steel; tin plates; pottery, bricks, tiles, etc.; engineering; miscellaneous metals; cotton; woollen and worsted; shipbuilding; and fishing, shipping and docks. The industries to which the figures relate include 64.1 per cent. of the insured population.

Table with columns for Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, Mean July 1923-1926, and Mean July 1923-Apr 1926, with data for months Jan through Dec.

District Analysis.—The greater proportion of the coal mining industry in Great Britain is concentrated in the northern section and in Wales.

If the country is divided into three sections as follows: (1) London and South Eastern Division; (2) South Western and Midlands; (3) North Eastern, North Western, Scotland and Wales, it is found that the insured persons classified as belonging to the coal-mining industry are distributed as follows: (1) 0.2 per cent.; (2) 20.0 per cent.; and (3) 79.8 per cent.

The iron and steel industries have very much the same distribution, and as these industries were the most seriously affected by the coal mining stoppage it was to be expected that the districts in which all these industries were mainly carried on would have the highest rates of unemployment, and that this might even extend to industries which on the whole were not affected so acutely by the coal stoppage.

The following Table illustrates this point. It shows for each industry named, on line "A" the average percentage rate of unemployment in each of the areas named above, and in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, during the seven months May to November, 1926, inclusive; on line "B" the corresponding average percentage rates of unemployment during the 34 months July, 1923, to April, 1926, inclusive; and on line "C" the percentage rates at 26th April, 1926.

In the second half of the Table the figures show the percentage distribution of the insured population in each industry named, in each of the three sections of the country, and finally in the last column the percentage proportion which the total number of insured persons in each industry is of the total for all industries taken together.

Table with columns: Industry, Percentages of Insured Persons Unemployed (L. and S.E., S.W. and Mids., N.E., Scot. and Wales, G.B. and N.I.), Percentage Distribution of Insured Population at July, 1926 (L. and S.E., S.W. and Mids., N.E., Scot. and Wales, G.B. and N.I.), and Percentage of Total (all Industries).

Table with columns: Industry, Percentages of Insured Persons Unemployed (L. and S.E., S.W. and Mids., N.E., Scot. and Wales, G.B. and N.I.), Percentage Distribution of Insured Population at July, 1926 (L. and S.E., S.W. and Mids., N.E., Scot. and Wales, G.B. and N.I.), and Percentage of Total (all Industries).

It will be seen that in all but a few of the industries named the rates of unemployment from May 1926 onwards were distinctly higher in the Northern Area and Wales than in the rest of the country. It is true that in several of these industries a similar comparative position existed before the coal stoppage began, but the figures show that in some cases the decline in employment as compared with the previous three years or with April 1926 was most acute in the coal mining areas.

The cotton and wool textile industries are, of course, mainly situated in the coal-mining areas, and there is an appreciable amount of each in the Midlands and South-Western Divisions. The latter districts, however, had lower rates of unemployment than the Northern areas, due, no doubt, to better supplies of fuel.

A similar position may be observed in the glass industries; to a pronounced degree in the brick and tile and building industries; and also in the miscellaneous metal group; in the boot and shoe; clothing, food and drink industries; in printing; gas, water and electricity; and also in the distributive trades. In the last-mentioned industry the Southern portion of the country was affected only to a very slight degree, even as compared with the April position.

SCHEME FOR REGISTRATION OF MERSEYSIDE SCALER BOYS.

The Ministry of Labour have received from the Mersey Ship Repairers' Federation, with whom they have been in communication for some time on the question of the decasualisation of scaler boy labour on the Mersey, particulars of a registration scheme which was due to come into operation on the 1st January, 1927.

Under the scheme the various firms concerned are to draw up a list of the scaler boys who are fairly regularly employed by them. The Registration Committee will then decide on the number of boys to be registered, and books will be issued to the boys so selected. When boys are engaged the firms employing them will collect their books, which will be returned to the boys on their discharge.

The Committee are to review the position of the requirements of the trade periodically, and to decide whether any increase or decrease of the numbers on the register should be made.

LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT INDEX.

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION SERIES FOR MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS.

In recent months a number of manufacturers and distributors have applied to the Ministry of Labour to enquire whether they could be regularly supplied with tables showing the course of unemployment from month to month in each town or area served by an Employment Exchange.

The information so required is regularly collected by the Ministry of Labour, but the general demand for local detail is not such as to warrant tables of the kind in question being printed in the MINISTRY OF LABOUR GAZETTE, which devotes the bulk of its unemployment pages to presenting the figures on an industry basis.

The Ministry of Labour has given careful consideration to the manner in which this specialised demand could be satisfied, and has reached the conclusion that it could best be met by the issue of a special subscription series. Communications were addressed to a certain number of manufacturers and distributors with a view to ascertaining what measure of support was to be expected for such a project.

The publication, which is entitled "Local Unemployment Index," will give, for 631 towns and for county areas in Great Britain, the numbers of insured persons in each area, together with the percentage rate of unemployment for men, women, and juveniles on the Monday nearest the 14th of each month.

Arrangements have been made for tabulating the returns received from Employment Exchanges, for preparing the figures in percentage form, and for printing and despatching in the shortest practicable time, and the information will be in the hands of subscribers within two to three weeks of the day to which the figures relate.

The cost of specially tabulating and printing this information is necessarily high in relation to the circulation which such a series at present commands, and the initial subscription has been fixed at £5 per annum. The Index will be issued to subscribers only. Subscriptions are received by H.M. Stationery Office, Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

EARNINGS AND HOURS IN THE BUILDING AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES.*

PARTICULARS are given below of the earnings and hours of labour in the building and allied industries, including public works construction, electrical installation, etc., in 1924, as shown by the returns received from employers in response to the general inquiry instituted in 1925 by the Ministry of Labour.

I.—AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS.

The number of returns received giving information regarding earnings was 12,883. The following Table shows the total number of workpeople, including adults and juveniles, covered by the returns, together with the average weekly earnings for the time actually worked in each of the four weeks.

Table with columns: Week ended, Males (Number of work-people covered, Average earnings), Females (Number of work-people covered, Average earnings), All Workers (Number of work-people covered, Average earnings).

* Particulars relating to various other groups of industries have been published in the issues of this GAZETTE for June-December, 1926. † Owing to the fact that a dispute was in progress in the Building Industry in the week ended 12th July, the particulars given by those employers who were affected by the dispute relate to the nearest week of an ordinary character, usually that ended 5th July.

It is possible that owing to intermittent engagements some workers may have been included in a particular week in the returns from more than one employer. The elimination of this factor, if it were practicable, would tend to increase the average weekly earnings shown.

II.—NORMAL HOURS OF LABOUR.

The returns received which gave particulars in regard to the normal weekly hours of labour covered on the average 277,873 workpeople. The following Table shows the proportion of the workers whose normal weekly hours, exclusive of mealtimes, in each of the four specified weeks, fell within the limits stated, together with the average normal hours:—

Table with columns: Week ended, Percentage of employees whose normal weekly hours were (Under 44, 44, 44½ to 46½, 46½, 47 to 47½, 48, Over 48), Average weekly normal hours.

Of the operatives whose normal hours exceeded 48 per week about two-thirds at each date were working 49 to 50 hours.

III.—HOURS ACTUALLY WORKED AND AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS.

The following Table shows the average number of hours actually worked in the four specified weeks by the workpeople covered by the returns received from those firms who were able to supply these particulars, together with the average earnings per hour of such workpeople. The average number of workers covered by these figures in the four weeks was 163,995.

Table with columns: Week ended, Average hours worked, Average hourly earnings.

As some employers were unable to give particulars of the total number of hours worked, the average weekly earnings obtained by multiplying the average hourly earnings by the average hours shown above do not correspond exactly with the average weekly earnings shown in Section I.

IV.—EXTENT OF SHORT TIME.

The following Table shows the proportion of workpeople covered by returns on the subject who were reported to be working less than full time, together with the average number of hours lost per week by such workpeople, and the average time lost by all the workpeople covered. Workpeople "stood off" for the whole of any of the weeks specified have been regarded as unemployed, and have not been taken into account in compiling the statistics.

Table with columns: Week ended, Proportion of Workpeople on short time, Average Number of hours lost by (Workpeople who worked less than full time, All Workpeople covered by the returns).

It should be observed that the amount of broken time in the building trades varies to some extent according to weather conditions, etc., and the extent to which these figures may be regarded as typical, therefore, depends on how far conditions in the four selected weeks of 1924 may be regarded as representative. It also appears possible, as the result of inquiries which have been made, that some employers, in making up their returns, may not have included time lost owing to inclement weather in the amount of "short time" returned.

EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED EX-SERVICE MEN.

THE latest returns show that there are approximately 27,500 firms on the King's National Roll. The number of disabled ex-Service men employed by these firms is approximately 375,000. At 28th December, 1926, the number of men in training was 450, and the number awaiting training, 81. Since August, 1919, 99,733 men have terminated training.

* See footnote † in previous column.

SHIPBUILDING IN THE QUARTER ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1926.

ACCORDING to Lloyd's Register Quarterly Shipbuilding Returns, the gross tonnage of merchant vessels under construction in Great Britain and Ireland at the end of December, 1926, amounted to 760,084 tons, as compared with 774,947 tons at the end of September, 1926, and 885,013 tons at the end of December, 1925.

An increase is shown in the tonnage commenced during the quarter, viz., 152,404 tons, as compared with 68,327 tons during the third quarter of 1926.

The tonnage launched during the quarter, viz., 67,853 tons, shows a marked reduction, of 139,888 tons, as compared with the figures for the previous three months.

The total horse-power of the marine engines building or being installed on board vessels in Great Britain and Ireland at the end of December, 1926, amounted to 720,735 h.p., as compared with 668,191 h.p. in the previous quarter.

The above figures are exclusive of warships and of merchant vessels under 100 tons gross.

WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

ON the whole there was a further improvement in employment in December, as compared with the previous month. A large number of firms throughout the industry continued to work reduced hours; but less short time was worked than in November, and in the week preceding the holidays many firms worked full time.

The percentage of insured workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 11.0 on 20th December, 1926, as compared with 14.2 on 22nd November, 1926, and with 8.8 on 21st December, 1925.

Employment with wool sorters was slightly better than in November, but it still continued slack on the whole with wool combers, although the position was better in the merino section than in the crossbred section. In both sorting and combing less short time was worked than in the previous month; about 44 per cent. of the workpeople in the sorting, combing and preparing branches of the industry covered by the returns received worked short time in the week ended 18th December, 1926, with a loss of about 13 hours each on the average.

In worsted weaving there was no appreciable change in the Bradford district, although in this district, as in others, a number of firms ran as full a week as possible prior to Christmas. In the Keighley and Silsden districts employment varied from fair to good; in the Huddersfield fine cloth trade employment was described as moderate, and the improvement of recent months was not quite maintained.

The returns received from employers for the week ended 18th December showed that about 23 per cent. of the weavers worked short time, with a loss, on an average, of about 8 3/4 hours each.

In the woollen section employment, taken as a whole, continued slack. About 32 per cent. of the spinners and about 33 per cent. of the weavers covered by the employers' returns worked short time in the week ended 18th December, with a loss on the average of about 10 3/4 hours each, in both departments; on the other hand, about 9 per cent. of the spinners were on overtime to the extent of eight hours each on the average, while about 3 per cent. of the weavers worked on an average seven hours per week overtime. In the Huddersfield and Colne Valley district very little night work was in progress and employment remained very quiet; while in the Heavy Woollen district of Dewsbury and Batley it was poor and worse, on the whole, than in the previous month; in the rag trade at Dewsbury there was some improvement. In the Leeds and Morley district employment was reported as moderate in the better class trade, but was bad in the low woollen trade; in the Yealand and Guiseley district employment was fair and better than a month earlier. With woollen workers in the Stockport district employment was good.

In the blanket manufacturing trade of the Heavy Woollen District employment was only moderate. Operatives in the blanket industry at Witney were fairly well employed. In the flannel trade of Saddleworth and Rochdale employment varied from fair to moderate.

In Scotland continued activity was reported in the tweed industry, and some firms were not able to run their full number of looms on account of the shortage of weavers, darners and menders.

In the carpet trade there was little change on the whole. Employment at Kidderminster was reported as moderate, with the majority of operatives on short time, but it was somewhat better than in November. At Bridgnorth employment continued fairly good. At Halifax, Liversedge and Sowerby Bridge there was some improvement, but elsewhere in Yorkshire employment remained slack. In Scotland it was fairly good on the whole.

The following Table summarises the returns received from employers.

* These figures do not take into account other forms of under-employment such as "playing for warps" and tending one instead of two looms.

Table showing employment and wages in the wool textile industry, categorized by department (Worsted, Woollen, Carpet, etc.) and district (Bradford, Huddersfield, etc.), with columns for Number of Workpeople, Total Wages paid, and Index figures.

In the worsted section of the industry, taken as a whole, the returns received from employers showed that 31 per cent. of their workpeople were on short time in the week ended 18th December, with a loss, on the average, of about 9 1/2 hours each.

* Revised figures.—It was recently found that, owing to changes in classification in the returns supplied by certain employers, the index figures published for "weaving" for August–November, 1926, were unduly high and those for "other departments" were correspondingly low.

Revised Index Figure (Jan. 1926 = 100.)

Table showing Revised Index Figure (Jan. 1926 = 100.) for various departments and districts from July to December.

† Most of the districts are indicated by the names of their principal towns, but neighbouring towns and areas are included in each case. ‡ See footnote * in previous column.

The following Table shows, by districts and departments, the percentage increase or decrease in the numbers employed, in the week ended 18th December, by firms who supplied returns for the purpose of the foregoing Table (excluding the carpet section), as compared with the numbers employed by the same firms in the week ended 27th November.

Table showing percentage change in numbers employed by district and department, with columns for Wool Sorting, Spinning, Weaving, Other Depts., and All Depts.

The following Table shows the number of men and of women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in the principal wool textile trade centres at 20th December, 1926:

Table showing Numbers (excluding Casuals) on the Register at 20th December, 1926, categorized by Department and gender.

The following Table shows the increases and decreases as compared with the 22nd November, 1926:

Table showing increases and decreases in numbers of workpeople as compared with the 22nd November, 1926, categorized by Department and gender.

The imports, less re-exports of raw wool (sheep's or lambs') were 36,381,700 lbs. in December, 1926, compared with 27,822,500 lbs. in November, 1926, and 53,206,000 lbs. in December, 1925.

The exports of woollen and worsted yarns were 3,639,700 lbs. compared with 4,115,500 lbs. in November, 1926, and with 3,611,500 lbs. in December, 1925.

The exports of woollen and worsted tissues were 12,465,300 square yards, compared with 13,295,800 square yards in November, 1926, and 14,821,900 square yards in December, 1925.

The exports of blankets were 63,988 pairs, 131,598 pairs and 86,668 pairs in December, 1926, November, 1926, and December, 1925.

COTTON INDUSTRY.

IN this industry employment in all the principal departments showed an improvement in December, but remained generally very poor; such improvement as there was occurred chiefly in the week before Christmas, and was in some cases followed by extended holidays.

In accordance with the decision of the Short Time Committee of the Employers' Federation organised restriction on working hours in the American spinning section was discontinued on 18th December. Although, following upon this, there was an increase in working hours in some cases, there was no general resumption of full-time working; on the contrary, it was reported that little more than half time had been worked in this section during the month.

The percentage of insured workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges was 13.2 on the 20th December, 1926, as compared with 19.0 on the 22nd November, 1926, and with 6.7 on the 21st December, 1925.

In the Oldham and Stockport districts employment in the spinning department, although still slack, showed an improvement before Christmas, but many mills closed for an extended holiday after Christmas. In the manufacturing section at Oldham there was no appreciable change; employment was still slack, particularly in the velvet and fancy sections.

In the Bolton district employment with spinners showed an improvement; with weavers and winders it was still bad. At Leigh employment was reported as good both with spinners and with weavers, and better than in November; at Chorley it was fair in the spinning department. At Bury short-time working was still very prevalent, and most mills closed for extended holidays at Christmas; at Rochdale employment was still bad, but the improvement reported in November continued.

In most of the principal weaving districts there was some further improvement in December. At Blackburn the improvement reported in the two previous months continued; several factories restarted work and there was much activity in the preparation departments. At Burnley employment was still slack, and worse than a year ago; there was some improvement immediately before Christmas, but some firms closed down for a whole week after Christmas. At Preston after the first week in December there was a gradual improvement, until at the end of the third week only four mills were standing idle; in the week after Christmas, however, many mills were again idle. At Accrington an increased demand for bleaching cloths and shirtings caused an increase in the amount of work available for weavers. At Darwen employment improved, though under-employment was still prevalent; there was also an improvement at Colne and at Great Harwood. In the Rossendale Valley there was a slight improvement at the beginning of December, but a number of mills stopped for extended holidays at the end of the month; about 50 per cent. of the operatives were under-employed (i.e. working on less than the normal number of machines), and about 15 per cent. were totally unemployed. At Padiham employment was reported as fair, and better than in November. At Nelson employment continued bad, with much short time and under-employment, particularly in the coloured section. At Todmorden there was an improvement in employment before Christmas, but extended holidays afterwards. In Yorkshire also there was some improvement before Christmas, full time being resumed, with few exceptions, in the Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge districts; in other Yorkshire districts short time and unemployment were still common.

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

Table summarising information received from employers who furnished returns for three periods, categorized by Department and District, with columns for Number of Workpeople and Total Wages paid.

Returns from firms employing about 78,000 workpeople in the week ended 18th December showed that about 19 per cent. of these workpeople were on short time in that week, with a loss of about 16 hours each on the average.

The following Table shows the number of men and of women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in the principal cotton trade centres at 20th December, 1926 :-

Table showing numbers of men and women (excluding casuals) on the Register at 20th December, 1926, categorized by Department and status (Wholly Unemployed, Temporarily Stopped, Total).

The following Table shows the increases and decreases as compared with 22nd November, 1926 :-

Table showing the increases and decreases in numbers of men and women (excluding casuals) on the Register at 20th December, 1926, compared with 22nd November, 1926.

The imports (less re-exports) of raw cotton (including cotton linters) were 244,953,800 lbs. in December, 1926, compared with 229,833,300 lbs. in November, 1926, and with 273,981,800 lbs. in December, 1925.

The exports of cotton yarn were 14,822,000 lbs. in December, 1926, compared with 15,333,700 lbs. in November, 1926, and with 17,947,100 lbs. in December, 1925.

The exports of cotton piece goods were 239,775,600 square yards, as compared with 277,639,700 square yards in the previous month, and with 382,184,700 square yards in December, 1925.

BOOT AND SHOE INDUSTRY.

EMPLOYMENT remained moderate, on the whole, and was at about the same level as in November and as in December, 1925; a good deal of short time was still worked. As usual before a holiday period there was some increased activity with certain firms in getting out orders immediately before Christmas; but this had not much influence on the general state of employment, and in the majority of centres the factories closed for a week or longer after Christmas.

The percentage of workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 10.4 on 20th December, 1926, as compared with 10.5 on 22nd November, 1926, and with 8.5 on 21st December, 1925.

The following Table summarises the information received from those employers who furnished returns :-

Large table summarizing employment data for the Boot and Shoe Industry, showing workpeople and wages for various districts and regions like England and Wales, Scotland, and Great Britain.

Returns from firms employing 41,500 operatives in the week ended 18th December, 1926, showed that 37 per cent. of these operatives worked short time in that week, losing, on an average, about 11 hours each.

In London employment was moderate, and considerably below the level of December, 1925. At Leicester it continued quiet; the demand for gaiters and for Russian boots provided some employment but nearly 43 per cent. of the workpeople covered by the returns were on short time prior to the holidays, and most factories remained closed at Christmas until after the New Year.

Employment was fairly good, and better than a year before, at Stafford; some short time, however, was still worked. At Norwich employment was slack, especially in the turn-shoe trade, and a large number of operatives were unemployed; most factories closed down for over a week at Christmas.

In the Bristol and Kingswood district employment was moderate, and considerably better than in December, 1925; only about one-fifth of the operatives were on short time before the holidays; some firms in this district were benefiting from the revived demand for miners' boots; most factories, however, remained closed for a week at Christmas.

There was no marked change in Scotland. Employment was fair generally; but in one or two centres a decline was reported, particularly at Edinburgh, where employment was very quiet.

The following Table shows the number of men and of women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in the principal centres of the boot and shoe industry at 20th December, 1926 :-

Table showing the number of men and women (other than casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in principal centres of the boot and shoe industry at 20th December, 1926.

The following Table shows the increases and decreases as compared with 22nd November, 1926 :-

Table showing the increases and decreases in numbers of men and women (excluding casuals) on the registers of Employment Exchanges in principal centres of the boot and shoe industry compared with 22nd November, 1926.

The exports of boots and shoes in December, 1926, amounted to 90,779 dozen pairs, or 37,987 dozen pairs less than in November, 1926, and 6,940 dozen pairs less than in December, 1925.

BUILDING TRADE.

EMPLOYMENT during December varied considerably as between different centres. With skilled operatives taken as a whole, it showed a decline, but, except with painters, was generally fair; it remained moderate, in most districts, with unskilled workers. Employment was again adversely affected, in some districts, by a shortage of materials, resulting from the effects of the recent stoppage in the coal-mining industry, and there was a certain amount of short-time working due to bad weather conditions.

As regards individual occupations, employment showed some decline with plasterers, but was good in most districts, and a shortage of this class of labour was again reported from a few centres; it remained fairly good in many districts with bricklayers and with slaters, and was fair, on the whole, with carpenters and joiners; it continued generally quiet with masons. There was a decline with plumbers, and employment was moderate; it showed a further decline with painters, and was very slack; it continued moderate, on the whole, with tradesmen's labourers.

The following Table shows the numbers and percentages of workpeople insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts who were unemployed at 20th December, 1926, together with the increase or decrease in the percentages as compared with the previous month and with December, 1925 :-

Table showing the numbers and percentages of workpeople insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts who were unemployed at 20th December, 1926, categorized by Occupations and Divisions.

BUILDING PLANS APPROVED.

Returns from Local Authorities in 141 of the principal urban areas in Great Britain (except the London County Council Area), with a total population of 15,919,000, show that in December, 1926, plans were passed for buildings of an estimated cost of £4,814,300, as compared with £4,328,700 in November, 1926, and £5,150,300 in December, 1925.

For figures for the quarter ended December, 1926, in comparison with the corresponding quarter of 1925, see page 35.

BRICK TRADE.

EMPLOYMENT during December was fair on the whole and showed considerable improvement as compared with the previous month. In the Peterborough district it continued good.

The percentage of insured workpeople unemployed in the brick, pipe, tile, etc., trades, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 11.2 at 20th December, 1926, as compared with 17.3 at 22nd November, 1926, and 7.8 at 21st December, 1925.

The following Table summarises the information received from those employers who furnished returns :-

Table summarizing employment data for the Brick Trade, showing workpeople and wages for various districts and regions like Northern Counties, Midlands and Eastern Counties, etc.

* Comparisons of earnings are affected by changes in rates of wages in some districts.

PAPER MANUFACTURE, PRINTING, AND BOOKBINDING.

EMPLOYMENT in the paper trade in December was fairly good and showed a general improvement compared with the previous month, the resumption of coal supplies having an appreciable effect.

In the letterpress printing trade employment generally continued moderate, but showed a slight decline compared with November and was also worse than during December, 1925; it was again reported as slack at Glasgow and bad at Birmingham. With electrotypers and stereotypers employment continued very good in London and was fairly good at other centres, except at Manchester, where it was bad; compared with December, 1925, there was a decline at most centres.

In the lithographic printing trade employment was moderate on the whole, and rather worse than during the previous month and December, 1925. With lithographic artists employment was again moderate in London and bad at Manchester, and worse than in November at both centres.

Employment in the bookbinding trade again improved during the month, but was not so good as during December, 1925.

The percentage unemployed among insured workpeople covered by the Unemployment Insurance Acts in the printing and book-binding trades was 5.1 at 20th December, compared with 5.3 at 22nd November and 3.8 at 21st December, 1925. In the paper and paper-board industry, the percentage was 5.5 at 20th December, compared with 9.6 at 22nd November and 5.5 at 21st December, 1925.

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

Table summarizing returns received from Trade Unions, showing membership and percentages unemployed at end of Dec, Nov, Dec, and at previous months.

POTTERY TRADES.

EMPLOYMENT in North Staffordshire showed little change, though there was a seasonal decline towards the end of the month. At Worcester and Derby it was reported as fairly good; at Bristol it was fair. In the stoneware section in Scotland employment continued bad.

The percentage of insured workpeople unemployed, as indicated by the unemployment books lodged at Employment Exchanges, was 19.6 at 20th December, 1926, as compared with 18.5 at 22nd November, 1926, and 19.2 at 21st December, 1925.

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

Table summarizing employment data for Pottery Trades, showing workpeople and wages for various branches and districts like China Manufacture, Earthenware Manufacture, etc.

Returns from employers relative to short-time working showed that of 10,679 workpeople employed by firms furnishing information, 2,038, or 19 per cent., were working, on an average, about 13 hours less than full time in the week ended 18th December, 1926.

DOCK AND RIVERSIDE LABOUR.

THERE was a general improvement in December, and employment on the whole was moderate. At some ports, however, the reduction in the importation of foreign coal occasioned some slackness.

Among insured workpeople in the canal, river, dock and harbour service, 28.2 per cent. were unemployed at 20th December, 1926, as compared with 31.1 per cent. at 22nd November, 1926, and with 25.9 per cent. at 21st December, 1925.

London.—The following Table shows the average daily number of dock labourers employed at docks and wharves in respect of which returns were received for each week of the month:—

Table with columns: Period, Average Daily Number of Labourers employed in Docks and at Principal Wharves in London. Sub-headers: In Docks (By the Port of London Authority or through Contractors, By Ship-owners, etc.), At Wharves making Returns, Total Docks and Principal Wharves.

Tilbury.—The average daily number of dock labourers employed during December was 1,324, compared with 1,244 in November, and with 1,387 in December, 1925.

East Coast.—Employment at the North-East coast ports was slack, but there was on the whole some improvement as compared with the previous month. On the Humber it continued moderate. At the East Anglian ports it was moderate on the average, and rather worse than in November.

Liverpool.—Employment continued to improve and was fair. The average weekly number of dock labourers registered at the clearing houses under the Liverpool Docks Scheme as employed in the four weeks ended 24th December was 16,448, compared with 16,146 in November and with 17,102 in December, 1925.

Other Ports in England and Wales.—Employment at the South Wales ports was mainly fair, and showed a general improvement as compared with November. At Avonmouth it continued good. At Southampton it was fair, but not quite as good as in November. At Plymouth and other South-Western ports it remained slack.

Scottish and Irish Ports.—Employment at Dundee was good until the last week of December, when it fell off. It was fair at Leith and continued moderate at Glasgow, Grangemouth and Belfast.

SEAMEN.

EMPLOYMENT during December continued slack on the whole. Among insured workpeople in the shipping service, the percentage unemployed at 20th December, 1926, was 21.4, compared with 21.4 at 22nd November, 1926, and 20.6 at 21st December, 1925.

The demand for men on the Thames was moderate, and showed a substantial improvement following the Christmas holidays. It improved on the Tyne during December, and was described as fair at the end of the month. The demand was, on the whole, moderate on the Wear; it was fair on the Tees early in the month, and slack subsequently. At Hull the demand improved up to the holidays and then declined, being reported to be moderate at the close of the month. At Southampton it was generally quiet. The demand at Bristol was fair to quiet; at Avonmouth it was moderate, and improved towards the end of the month. It was quiet at Newport and moderate at Cardiff. There was a gradually increasing demand at Swansea until late in December, when a falling-off occurred. It improved in the first half of the month in the foreign-going trade on the Mersey, but declined afterwards, being described as moderate in the closing stages. The demand was mainly fair at Manchester, and quiet on the Clyde. It was rather quiet at Leith, and showed an improving tendency at the end of December. The demand at Belfast was dull on the whole, but showed increased activity in the middle of the month.

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

Table showing Number of Seamen* shipped in Dec., 1926, by Principal Ports. Columns: Principal Ports, Dec., 1926, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on a Month before, Year before, Year ended (Dec., 1926, Dec., 1925).

WORK OF EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES.

At 24th December, 1926, the total number of persons on the registers of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain was 1,351,045; in Great Britain and Northern Ireland it was 1,403,055.

Comparative figures for men, boys, women and girls, separately, for 29th November and 24th December are given below:—

Table comparing figures for 29th Nov. 1926 and 24th Dec. 1926. Columns: 29th Nov. 1926, 24th Dec. 1926, Total. Sub-headers: Persons normally in regular employment, Persons normally in casual employment, Wholly Unemployed, Temporary Stoppages.

The following Table gives particulars relating to certain branches of the work of Employment Exchanges in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the four weeks ended 24th December, 1926. Of the 78,848 vacancies filled, 43,415 were for men, 22,046 for women, and 13,387 for juveniles:—

Table showing Applications from Employers and Vacancies Filled for various weeks. Columns: Week ended, Applications from Employers (During Week, At end of Week), Vacancies Filled, Number of Workpeople on Registers.

* It will be understood that the numbers given are the numbers of separate engagements, and not of separate individuals. † Including Birkenhead and Garston. ‡ Including Avonmouth and Portishead. § Including Barry and Penarth.

The term "Employment Exchange," as used in this connection, includes Ministry of Labour Employment Exchanges and Branch Employment Offices, and also Juvenile Employment Bureaux under the control of Local Education Authorities which are exercising powers under Sec. 107 of the Education Act, 1921, and Sec. 6 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1923.

The figures include all workpeople on the Registers of Exchanges with the exception of those in the coal-mining industry who remained disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute. They include persons "suspended," or "stood off," and those who, although employed on a basis of systematic short time were not actually at work on the date in question.

** "Vacancies filled" include certain types of cases (described as Class B placements) in which the work of the Exchanges was limited; for instance, obtaining for an employer former employees, or placing the same men on relief works in alternate weeks. During the four weeks ended 22nd November 1926, the average number of such placements was 6,132 per week. The average number of placements of casual workers, such as dock labourers and coal porters, during the four weeks ended 24th December, 1926, was 1,000 per week.

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 24th December, 1926. In certain cases (e.g., Bristol, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Glasgow, etc.) the figures cover more than one Exchange area:—

Table showing Number of Persons on Registers at 24th December, 1926, by Area. Columns: Area, Men, Women, Juveniles, Total, Inc. (+) or Dec. (-) on 29th Nov., 1926.

* The figures are exclusive of those persons in the coal-mining industry who were still disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATISTICS: GREAT BRITAIN.

COMPOSITION OF STATISTICS.

On page 26 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 20th December, 1926, for the total of each group included in these statistics.

Table showing Unemployment Statistics: Great Britain. Columns: Men, Boys, Women, Girls, Total. Categories: 1. Unemployed — Special Schemes, 2. Claims admitted or under consideration, 3. Claimants disqualified but maintaining registration, 4. Insured non-claimants on main file, 5. Uninsured persons on Register, 6. Two months' file.

CLAIMS TO EXTENDED BENEFIT.

The following Table gives an analysis of the recommendations of Local Committees in Great Britain respecting the claims to "Extended Benefit" submitted during the period 16th Nov.—13th Dec., 1926:—

Table showing Claims to Extended Benefit. Columns: Males, Females, Total. Categories: Applications considered by Committees during period, Applications admitted by Committees during period, Applications definitely recommended for disallowance during period, Applications during the period recommended for postponement for a definite time.

NEW ENTRANTS INTO INSURANCE.

During the month of December, 1926, 63,079 applications for Unemployment Books were made at Local Offices of the Ministry of Labour in Great Britain. These applications were in respect of 8,088 men, 7,068 women, and 29,749 boys and 18,174 girls of 16 and 17 years of age. The figures are exclusive of cases in which, as the result of systematic search, duplication of such applications has been discovered.

UNEMPLOYMENT FUND.

During the four weeks ended 25th December, 1926, the receipts and payments of the Unemployment Fund were approximately as shown in the following Table:—

Table showing Unemployment Fund Receipts and Payments. Columns: Four weeks ended 25th Dec., 1926, Five weeks ended 27th Nov., 1926, Four weeks ended 26th Dec., 1925. Categories: Contributions (Receipts) by Employers, Service Departments (Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry), Exchequer, Payments (Benefit, Other Payments), Treasury Advances Outstanding.

* Includes refunds at age 60 and compensation for the abolition thereof, cost of administration, etc. † Excludes sum apportioned to Irish Free State on account of the deficit of the Unemployment Fund as at 31st March, 1922. This sum with interest up to 31st December, 1925, amounts to £332,431 8s. 3d. ‡ Includes sum apportioned to Irish Free State on account of the deficit of the Unemployment Fund as at 31st March, 1922. This sum with interest up to 30th June, 1925, amounted to £324,277 17s. 1d., the matter not being settled at this stage.

The statistics here presented show, industry by industry, the estimated number of persons insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, the number and percentage of such persons who were unemployed on the 20th December, 1926, and the increase or decrease at that date in the total percentages unemployed compared with a month earlier, a year ago, and two years ago, respectively.

The Unemployment Insurance Acts provide, subject to certain exceptions, for the compulsory insurance against unemployment of substantially all employed persons. The principal classes of persons who are excepted from such compulsory insurance are juveniles under 16 years of age, persons employed otherwise than by way of manual labour at a rate of remuneration exceeding in value £250 per annum, persons employed in agriculture and private domestic service, and outworkers. Persons employed by local public 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, also be excepted.

An unemployment book, on which is recorded, inter alia, the industry in which he is employed, is issued to every insured person, and this book must be lodged at an Employment Exchange whenever the insured person to whom it relates makes a claim for unemployment benefit, or, without claiming benefit, ceases to be employed in an insured trade. The book must be removed and deposited with the employer for stamping as soon as employment in an insured trade is resumed.

Insured persons who are disqualified for the receipt of unemployment benefit under the trade dispute disqualification are not included in the numbers unemployed, unless they are definitely maintaining registration for other employment.

The files of "lodged" books at the Employment Exchanges thus furnish for each industrial group a record of the unemployment of insured persons. In arriving at this figure the books of those persons who are known to be working in an insured trade, or to be sick or deceased, or who are known to have emigrated or gone

abroad, are of course excluded. In cases where information on these points is lacking the books remain in the "lodged" files, and are included in the statistics of unemployment, for a period of two months from the date on which the insured person was last in touch with the Employment Exchange.

This last item determines in the main the difference between the total number of unemployed persons given in the following Table and the figure given on page 24 showing the total number of persons registered at Employment Exchanges. The difference would be greater were it not that this latter figure includes uninsured persons who are maintaining registration. These do not appear in the figures of "books lodged," which relate solely to insured persons.

The statistics of unemployment in insured industries are presented in two separate Tables, one showing the numbers recorded as unemployed, and the other showing the estimated numbers insured and the percentages unemployed.

Each of these Tables gives an analysis of the figures, distinguishing between persons who are wholly unemployed (in the sense that they are definitely without a job) and those who are temporarily stopped or suspended from the service of an employer. The figures under the heading "temporary stoppages" include those persons recorded as unemployed on the date of the return who were either on short time or were otherwise stood off or suspended on the definite understanding that they were to return to their former employment within a period of six weeks from the date of suspension. In cases where there was no definite prospect of return within six weeks the individuals have been included in the statistics as "wholly unemployed." The only exception to this rule arises in the small number of cases where, although the expectation of resumption within the six weeks' period was not realised, a definite date for resumption of work had nevertheless been fixed. In such cases the individuals concerned have been included under the heading "temporary stoppages." The figures given in the grand total columns in both Tables are strictly comparable with the corresponding figures published each month since July, 1923.

NUMBERS OF INSURED PERSONS RECORDED AS UNEMPLOYED AT 20TH DECEMBER, 1926.

Table with columns for Industry, Wholly Unemployed (including casuals), Temporary Stoppages, and Total, subdivided into Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Great Britain only.

* The figures are exclusive of persons in the coal-mining industry who remained disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute which commenced on 1st May, 1926.

Table with columns for Industry, Wholly Unemployed (including casuals), Temporary Stoppages, and Total, subdivided into Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Great Britain only.

* The figures are exclusive of persons in the coal-mining industry who remained disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute which commenced on 1st May, 1926. † Including 74,853 Casuals (Males 74,185, Females 668).

NUMBERS INSURED AND PERCENTAGES UNEMPLOYED.

Table with columns for Industry, Estimated Number of Insured Persons at July, 1926, Percentage Unemployed at 20th December, 1926, and Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Total Percentage Unemployed as compared with 22nd Nov. 1926, 21st Dec. 1925, and 22nd Dec. 1924. Includes sub-sections for Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Great Britain only.

* The figures for November and December, 1926 are exclusive of persons in the coal-mining industry who remained disqualified for unemployment benefit on account of the dispute which commenced on 1st May, 1926

Table for Great Britain and Northern Ireland showing industry-wise data for 1926, including estimated insured persons, percentage unemployed, and changes compared to previous periods. Includes a 'Total' row at the bottom.

* These percentages include coal-mining, those miners who were not disqualified for benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Acts by reason of the dispute, being taken as unemployed for the purpose of the percentage, but not those who remained disqualified for unemployment benefit owing to the dispute. If coal-mining were excluded, the percentage of unemployment in other trades at 20th December, 1926, would be Males 13.6, Females 8.4, Total 12.1, as compared with 15.8, 10.0, and 14.1 respectively at 22nd November, 1926. The percentage for Great Britain only at 20th December, 1926, exclusive of coal-mining, is 11.9, compared with 13.9 at 22nd November, 1926.

PRINCIPAL VARIATIONS IN NUMBERS OF INSURED PERSONS RECORDED AS UNEMPLOYED.

The following Table indicates for Great Britain and Northern Ireland the industries in which the numbers of insured persons recorded as unemployed at 20th December, 1926, differed from the figures for 22nd November, 1926, to the extent of 1,500 or more. The Table shows the increases and decreases for males and females separately, together with the total net variation for all insured industries.

Table showing principal variations in numbers of insured persons recorded as unemployed, with columns for Industry, Males, Females, Total, and Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Numbers recorded as Unemployed at 20th December, 1926, as compared with 22nd November, 1926.

* These groups, which include miscellaneous industries, correspond with those under the same headings in the Tables on pages 26-29.

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 December, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, resulted in an aggregate increase of about £20,000 in the weekly full-time wages of nearly 150,000 workpeople, and in a reduction of £4,650 in the weekly wages of 24,000 workpeople. These figures are exclusive of the effect of changes in the wages of coal miners in certain districts which were reported in the December issue of the GAZETTE, and included in the statistics relating to November; some of those changes took effect from 1st or 2nd December.

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

Table with 5 columns: Group of Industries, Approximate Number of Workpeople affected by (Increases, Decreases), Amount of Changes in Weekly Wages (£, £).

In the mining group the principal increases included in the figures affected coal miners in Warwickshire, South Staffordshire, and the Forest of Dean, in which districts the percentage additions to basis rates were raised by about 6 or 7 per cent. as compared with the previous rates in Warwickshire and South Staffordshire, and by 20 per cent. in the Forest of Dean. Among the workpeople for whom reductions are recorded were coal miners in North Wales and the Bristol district, in whose case the percentage additions to basis rates were reduced by 10 per cent. as compared with the previous rates; and iron miners in Cumberland, who sustained reductions of varying amounts up to 1s. 3d. per shift.

In the metal group there was an increase of nearly 7 per cent. on the current wages of iron puddlers and iron and steel millmen in the Midlands, and of nearly 2 per cent. on those of steel sheet millmen and galvanisers in various districts in England and Wales. Workpeople employed in the electrical cable-making industry also had their wages increased, adult male workers receiving an

increase of 1s. 6d. or 1s. 11½d. per week and adult female workers an increase of 1s. per week. Other workpeople in this group whose wages were increased in December included blastfurnacemen in Cumberland, metallic bedstead makers, penmakers at Birmingham, and farriers in London and various towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Among the other industrial groups there were increases of 3s. 3d. and 2s. 6d. per week in the wages of men and women respectively employed in the hosiery industry at Hawick; roller leather makers received an increase of about 3 per cent. on their current wages, and men employed in the non-trading services of local authorities in the East Midlands received an increase of ¼d. per hour. Under the Trade Boards Acts there were increases in the minimum rates for certain classes of workpeople employed in brush and broom making and coffin furniture and casket making. The principal reduction concerned railway traffic workers in Northern Ireland, who, with the exception of engine-drivers, firemen and cleaners, had their wages reduced by amounts varying from 1s. 4d. to 2s. per week.

Of the total increase of £19,850 per week included in the Table in the previous column over £8,800 took effect under sliding scales based on selling prices, and £4,600 under sliding scales based on the cost of living, the latter amount including £2,800 under scales arranged by joint standing bodies of employers and workpeople or by Trade Boards. Practically the whole of the remaining changes were the result of direct negotiations between employers and workpeople, nearly the whole of the amount being accounted for by increases in the wages of coal miners, following the general stoppage of work.

Of the reduction of £4,650 per week, nearly £1,100 took effect under sliding scales based on selling prices, and the remainder was the result of direct negotiations between employers and workpeople, nearly the whole of the amount being accounted for by reductions in coal miners' wages.

Hours of Labour.

In addition to the changes in the hours of coal miners reported in the December issue of the GAZETTE, particulars are given in the Table on page 33 of the increases which have occurred in the South Staffordshire, Forest of Dean, Bristol, and North Wales coalfields.

Changes in Wages and Hours in 1926.

A special article dealing with these changes appears on pages 2 and 3.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING DECEMBER, 1926.

Table with 5 columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of change. Includes Mining and Quarrying, Coal Mining, Iron Mining.

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

† Excluding the changes in the coal-mining industry, in certain districts, reported in the December issue of the GAZETTE.

‡ See also under Changes in Hours of Labour on page 33, except for Warwickshire. The conditions described are those under which work is reported to have been resumed in the various coalfields mentioned during December.

§ These particulars apply to the largest collieries. At a smaller colliery where the hours of underground workers have also been increased to 8 per shift, there was a reduction of about 20 per cent. on basis rates and the subsistence allowance was also reduced.

¶ The date varied according to when work was resumed at the various collieries.

** Under selling-price sliding-scale arrangements.

PRINCIPAL CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED DURING DECEMBER, 1926 (continued).

Table with 5 columns: Industry, Locality, Date from which change took effect, Classes of Workpeople, Particulars of Change. Includes Mining and Quarrying, Fertiliser, etc., Manufacture, Pig Iron Manufacture, Iron and Steel Manufacture, Engineering, etc., Galvanising, Electrical Cable Manufacture, Metallic Bedstead Manufacture, Steel and Metal Pens and other Small Wares Manufacture, Farriery.

* Under selling-price sliding-scale arrangements. † Under cost-of-living sliding-scale arrangements. ‡ The change took effect under an arrangement made by the Sheet Trade (Conciliation) Board.

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 December, 1926, in the thirty-one selected areas named below was 860,021, or 16.6 per cent. less than in the previous month, but 5.5 per cent. more than in December, 1925.

In the twenty-five selected areas in England and Wales the number of persons relieved in December, 1926, was 713,704, a decrease of 19.2 per cent. as compared with November, but an increase of 5.4 per cent. as compared with a year ago.

Recipients of indoor relief in the thirty-one districts in December numbered 129,539, or 0.8 per cent. less than in the previous month, but 1.4 per cent. more than in December, 1925.

Twenty-one areas showed decreases in the number per 10,000 relieved in December, as compared with the previous month, including Barnsley (2,095 per 10,000), Wigan (992 per 10,000) and Newcastle (500 per 10,000); while ten areas showed small increases.

In the districts included in the Table, the numbers relieved per 10,000 of population ranged from 125 in the Halifax and Huddersfield area and 178 in the Bolton, Oldham, etc. area, to 1,198 in the East Metropolitan District.

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

Table for England and Wales, and Scotland, showing relief numbers and rates per 10,000 for various districts and total figures.

* The figures include dependants, but exclude casuals, lunatics in asylums, registered hospitals and licensed houses, and persons receiving out-door medical relief only.

RETAIL PRICES OVERSEAS.

[N.B.—While the percentages given in the following Summary Tables are derived from the most authoritative sources of statistical information, certain differences in the nature and scope of the data used, in the methods of combining such data and in the periods for which the rise is measured, suggest the need for caution in drawing conclusions from a comparison between the figures for any two countries or cities.

I.—FOOD.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN RETAIL FOOD PRICES IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES AS COMPARED WITH JULY, 1914.*

Table showing percentage increase in retail food prices for various countries from July 1914 to July 1926, categorized by food items like cereals, sugar, oil, etc.

II.—ALL ITEMS.

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN THE COST OF FOOD, TOGETHER WITH (SO FAR AS POSSIBLE) HOUSE-RENT, CLOTHING, FUEL AND LIGHT AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD REQUIREMENTS, AS COMPARED WITH JULY, 1914.†

Table showing percentage increase in the cost of food and other household requirements for various countries from July 1914 to July 1926, including categories like food, house-rent, clothing, etc.

* Exceptions to this are: France (other towns), August, 1914; The Hague, January to July, 1914; Rome and Milan, January to June, 1914; Switzerland, June, 1914; Amsterdam, Spain, South Africa, average, 1914; Germany, average, 1913-1914.

EMPLOYMENT OVERSEAS.

[N.B.—The following paragraphs include an abstract of such official information as is available with regard to the state of employment abroad, in order to indicate, as far as possible, the fluctuations in employment in each country from period to period.

FRANCE.* Unemployment in December.—The total number of unemployed persons remaining on the "live register" of the Exchanges on 31st December, 1926, was 21,439 (14,769 men and 6,670 women).

GERMANY.† Employment in November.—The Reichsarbeitsblatt states that the general trend of the labour market in the month under review followed the course of former years.

The returns from statutory health insurance societies showed a decrease in the number of members‡ in employment, the total on 1st December being 13,453,436, as compared with 13,455,144 on 1st November, a decrease of 0.01 per cent.

Return relating to 3,414,849 organised workers were submitted by 38 national trade unions. Of these 484,978, or 14.2 per cent., were totally unemployed on 27th November, as compared with 14.2 per cent. also on 30th October, and 10.7 per cent. at the end of November, 1925.

The following Table gives particulars of total unemployment among the principal Unions included in the returns:—

Table showing unemployment figures for various unions (S.D., H.D., O.), including membership and percentage unemployed, broken down by industry like porcelain, glass, metal, etc.

Figures showing the number of persons in receipt of benefit in respect of total unemployment are available for 15th December, on which date the total was 1,463,480. On 1st December the corresponding figure was 1,369,454, and on 15th November, 1,316,758.

At the end of November the Employment Exchanges making returns reported 2,007,193 persons on the "live register," as against 1,920,059 at the end of October. The number of vacant situations at the end of November was 19,465 as compared with 22,178 at the end of October.

* Bulletin du Marché du Travail, 7th January 1927, Paris. † Reichsarbeitsblatt, 1st January, 1927, Berlin. ‡ "Members" of these societies are persons under obligation to pay insurance premiums. During unemployment they are relieved of this obligation; hence paying members are assumed to be in employment.

AUSTRIA.

Unemployment in November.—According to the issue of Statistische Nachrichten (the journal of the Austrian Department of Statistics) for 25th December, 1926, the number of persons in receipt of unemployment benefit in Austria was 168,757 at the end of November, 1926, as compared with 151,183 at the end of the preceding month and 159,248 at the end of November, 1925.

HOLLAND.*

Unemployment in November.—The Journal of the Dutch Statistical Office contains preliminary figures compiled by the State Department of Unemployment Insurance and Employment Exchanges, which show that out of 267,118 members of subsidised unemployment funds making returns for the week ended 27th November, 1926, 20,650 (7.7 per cent.) were unemployed during the whole week, and 4,746 (1.8 per cent.) for less than six days.

SWITZERLAND.†

Unemployment in November.—On 30th November, 1926, the number of applications remaining on the "live register" of Employment Exchanges making returns to the Federal Labour Department was 16,366 (or 12.5 per cent. of the employed population according to the census of 1920), as compared with 14,253 (10.8 per cent.) at the end of October and 15,760 at the end of November, 1925.

DENMARK.‡

Unemployment in November.—Returns supplied to the Danish Statistical Department by trade unions and by the Central Employment Exchange show that out of 270,779 workpeople, 22.1 per cent. were unemployed on 26th November, 1926, as against 18.6 per cent. at the end of the preceding month, and 20.5 per cent. at the end of November, 1925.

SWEDEN.§

Unemployment in November.—The percentage of members of trade unions making returns who were unemployed on 30th November, 1926, was 13.0, as compared with 11.2 on 31st October, and 11.8 on 30th November, 1925.

POLAND.¶

Unemployment in October.—According to the official journal of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the estimated number of persons unemployed on 20th November, 1926 (the latest date for which figures are available), was 197,981 as compared with 196,586 on 30th October, and 249,666 at the end of November, 1925.

UNITED STATES.¶¶

Employment in November.—Figures relating to the volume of employment in November, based on returns from 10,296 establishments in 54 industries, are published by the Federal Bureau of Labour Statistics.

Index Number of Employment, November.—If the monthly average index number of employment in manufacturing industries in 1923 be taken as 100, the corresponding figure for November, 1926, is 95.4, as compared with 98.6 in October, and 96.2 in November, 1925.

CANADA.¶¶¶

Employment in December.**—For 1st December, 1926, returns were received by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from 5,895 firms, with an aggregate of 832,847 upon their pay rolls.

Trade Union Unemployment in November.††—On 30th November, 1926, 4.7 per cent. of the aggregate membership of trade unions making returns were unemployed, as compared with 2.6 at the end of October and 5.7 per cent. at the end of November, 1925.

* Maands-hrift van het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 31st December 1926. The Hague. † Sozialstatistische Mitteilungen, December, 1926, Bern. The figures relate to exchanges affiliated to the Association of Swiss Employment Exchanges.

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The "MINISTRY OF LABOUR GAZETTE" is published on or about the 18th of each month, price 6d. net. The annual subscription (post free) is 7s.

The Publishers (to whom should be addressed all communications concerning subscriptions and sales) are H.M. Stationery Office, Adastral 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.