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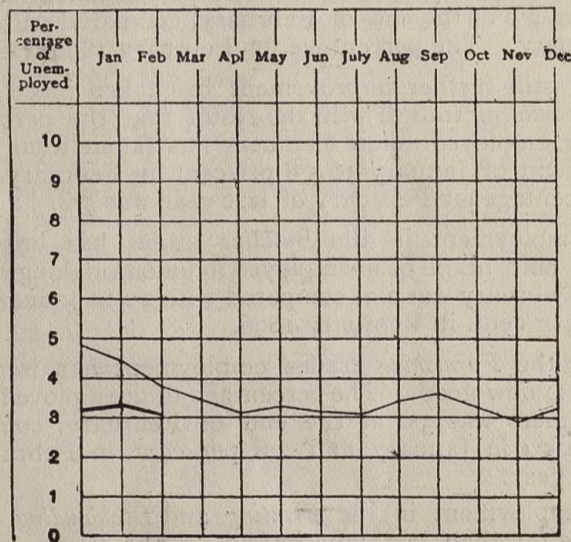
STATE OF EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY.*

THE state of the labour market has continued to improve during February, the Coal, Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and other industries being more fully employed, and the percentage of unemployed members of trade unions in most important groups of trades showing a decline.

In the 115 trade unions making returns, with an aggregate membership of 451,544, 13,332 (or 3.0 per cent.) are reported as unemployed at the end of February, compared with 3.3 per cent. in January, and with 3.8 per cent. in the 106 unions, with a membership of 409,102 from which returns were received for February 1896.

The following chart enables a comparison to be made with last year:—

Chart showing the percentage of unemployed members of the trade unions making returns at the close of each month of 1896 and of each completed month of 1897.



The proportions of unemployed in the 115 unions making returns may be classified as follows:—

	Unions.	Members.
Under 3 per cent.	68	292,209
3 and under 5 per cent.	26	61,611
5 and under 7 per cent.	12	86,840
7 and under 10 per cent.	3	3,938
10 per cent. and upwards	6	6,946

Employment in Various Industries.—Coal Mining.—

Employment was good during February, being better in every district than a year ago, and also better in most districts than during January. The average number of days worked per week at pits employing 414,241 persons was 5.34, compared with 5.15 in January and 4.91 in February 1896. Unemployed miners in trade unions in Northumberland and Durham amounted at the end of February to 1.6 per cent. of the

* The reports on the State of Employment refer strictly to the month of February, and do not cover any changes which may have occurred between February 28th and March 15th. This remark also applies to the reports on pp. 75-87.

membership, as against 1.4 per cent. at the end of January, and 2.0 per cent. at the end of February 1896. (For further details see page 75.)

Iron Mining.—Employment again improved during February. At 125 mines and openworks the 16,624 workpeople employed worked an average of 5.86 days per week, as compared with 5.72 days in January and 5.85 in February 1896. The number employed was higher by about 4.3 per cent. than a year ago. (For further details see page 76.)

In the **Pig Iron Industry** employment was better than a year ago. At the end of February the ironmasters making returns had 351 furnaces in blast, compared with 343 in February 1896. The number of workpeople employed was 22,247, compared with 21,806 a year ago. Compared with the end of January employment is stationary, the number of furnaces in blast having increased by 2, while the number of workpeople employed has decreased by 69. (For further details see page 76.)

Employment at **Steelworks** continued during February much better than a year ago. At 128 works making returns 37,079 persons were employed at the end of February, as compared with 34,185 a year ago, an increase of 8.5 per cent. (For further details see page 77.)

At **Puddling Furnaces and Rolling Mills** employment during February was about the same as a year ago. At 94 works 18,278 persons were employed at the end of February, as compared with 18,210 at the end of February 1896. (For further details see page 77.)

In the **Tinplate** trade there has been a further slight improvement in employment. The number of mills reported as being at work at 87 works was 334 at the end of February, or 2 more than at the end of the previous month. (For further details see page 77.)

Employment in the **Engineering** and kindred trades is still good, the percentage of unemployed union members being 2.0 at the end of February, compared with 1.9 in January. The percentage for February 1896 was 3.4.

A still further improvement has taken place in the **Shipbuilding** trades, with the result that the percentage of unemployed union members has fallen from 7.4 at the end of January to 5.8 per cent. in February. The percentage for February of last year was 7.8.

Employment in the **Building** trades has improved. The percentage of unemployed in unions making returns for February was 2.0, compared with 2.4 in January, and 2.5 per cent. in February 1896.

In the **Furnishing** trades employment has improved and is now good. The percentage of unemployed union members was 3.0 at the end of February, compared with 5.1 in January and 2.6 per cent. in February of last year.

Employment in the **Printing and Bookbinding** trades is better than last month, and on the whole is fairly good. The percentage of unemployed union members at the end of February was 3.9, compared with 4.5 in January, and 4.9 per cent. in February 1896.

Employment in the **Paper** trade has somewhat improved. The percentage of unemployed union members at the end of February was 2.9, compared with 3.2 in January. The percentage for February 1896, was 2.8.

In the **Glass** trade, employment remains slack. The percentage of unemployed union members at the end of February was 12.5, compared with 12.1 at the end of January, and 9.5 per cent. in February 1896.

Employment in the **Leather** trades is good. The percentage of unemployed union members at the end of February was 2.0, compared with 2.7 in January, and 6.2 per cent. in February of last year.

Employment in the ready-made **Boot and Shoe** trade has considerably improved; improvement is also reported in the bespoke branch.

Employment in the ready-made **Tailoring** trade improved during the month and at the end was fairly good; in the bespoke branch it remains dull in some centres, but has improved generally.

In the **Spinning** branch of the **Cotton** trade employment continues moderate; in the **Weaving** branch an improvement is reported, though much short time is worked.

Employment in the **Woollen** trade shows a slight improvement, but is still slack. In the **Worsted** trade it continues dull. In the **Hosiery** trade it is moderate.

As regards the employment of **women** in the **Textile** trades, information respecting 490 mills employing about 78,000 women and girls, shows that 67 per cent. were in mills giving full employment during the month, compared with 76 per cent. among those for whom returns were received for January, and 88 per cent. for February 1896. (For further details, see p. 79.)

Dock and Riverside Labour.—In London, employment was not so good as in January, but better than a year ago. The average number of labourers employed daily in the docks and principal wharves was 14,762, as compared with 16,008 in January, and 13,236 in February 1896. (For further details, see page 78.)

Agricultural Labour.—The state of agricultural employment in the month of February was generally of a satisfactory character. In the earlier portion of the month there was in certain districts some slight irregularity of work owing to wet weather, but in the latter part employment was generally regular. In some districts there was a great demand for labour, as farm work was backward owing to the long spell of unfavourable weather. (For further details see page 77.)

Trade Disputes.—Sixty-six fresh disputes occurred in February 1897 involving 23,671 workpeople as compared with 48 involving 16,615 workpeople in January, and 78 involving nearly 17,000 workpeople in February 1896. Twenty-three disputes took place in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding trades, 19 in the textile trades, 6 in the building, 5 in the mining industry, 4 in the clothing trades, 1 in connection with railway service, and 8 in other industries. Of the 52 new and old disputes involving 23,379 workpeople, of which the settlement is recorded, 18 involving 6,044 persons were successful from the point of view of the workpeople; 18 involving 7,738 persons, unsuccessful; 13 involving 3,477 resulted in a compromise, and in the remaining 3 disputes involving 6,120 workpeople, the workpeople returned to work pending consideration of the questions at issue. (For further details see page 92.)

Changes in Rates of Wages.—During February changes in rates of wages affecting nearly 50,000 workpeople were reported, of whom all except 300 received increases. The net result of the changes is an advance estimated at 1s. 4d. per head in the weekly wages of those affected. The increases include about 44,000 workpeople in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding industries, 2,500 in the coal mining industry, and 1,700 in the building trades.

Changes affecting over 5,000 workpeople took place under sliding scales, wages boards, &c., and changes affecting nearly 4,000 workpeople were preceded by strikes. The remainder, involving about 41,000 workpeople, were settled by negotiation or otherwise. (For further details see page 88.)

Pauperism.—In 35 selected urban districts 343,130 persons were relieved on one day in the second week of February. These figures correspond to a rate of 219 per 10,000 of the population of those districts, or 3 less per 10,000 than in February 1896. (For further details see page 95.)

Emigration.—The number of British and Irish passengers who left the United Kingdom for places out of Europe during February was 6,778, as compared with 8,211 in February 1896. (For further details see page 87.)

TRADE DISPUTES IN 1896.

PRELIMINARY FIGURES.

The following figures with regard to the trade disputes of 1896 are preliminary only, and are liable to some revision.

The total number of disputes recorded was greater in 1896 than in 1895, being 1,037 as compared with 876. But the number of persons affected was less than in any of the seven preceding years, being 199,600 in 1896, as compared with 263,758 in 1895, 324,245 in 1894, and 636,386 in 1893.

The 1,037 disputes were grouped as follows by industries:—

Trades.	Number of Disputes	Number of Persons Involved.	Number of Persons involved in Disputes in the four preceding years.			
			1895.	1894.	1893.	1892.
			Preliminary figures.			
Building	203	33,800	9,898	15,247	17,738	18,175
Mining and Quarrying	175	69,200	83,879	216,880	506,182	120,386
Metal, Engineering, and Shipbuilding	285	47,400	46,314	27,899	30,309	39,759
Textile	170	34,200	67,415	39,025	45,274	102,722
Clothing	51	3,600	67,078	6,853	10,821	36,431
Miscellaneous	153	11,400	9,174	18,341	26,069	39,326
Total	1,037	199,600	263,758	324,245	636,386	366,799

These figures show a great increase in 1896 in the number affected by disputes in the building trades, which amounted to 33,800, compared with 9,898 in 1895. This increase is principally due to the general disputes in the London and Dublin building trades. On the other hand the number affected in the clothing trades was only 3,600, compared with no less than 57,078 (largely boot and shoe operatives) in the previous year. The textile trades also show a falling off in numbers involved as compared with 1895, in which year a strike of 32,000 jute operatives took place in Dundee.

Of the 1,037 disputes reported, 246, involving 49,400 persons began in the first quarter of the year; 349, involving 70,800 persons in the second quarter; 278, involving 47,800 persons in the third quarter; and 164, involving 31,600 in the fourth quarter.

Of the 1,037 disputes, 776, involving 158,800 persons, occurred in England and Wales; 198, involving 26,800 persons in Scotland; and 63, involving 14,000 persons in Ireland.

Grouping the persons engaged in the disputes of the year, of which a settlement has been reported, according to the degree of their success or failure we find that about 74,100 workpeople engaged in 439 disputes were successful; 49,800 engaged in 189 disputes were partially successful; 67,100 engaged in 346 disputes were unsuccessful; while 3,900 were engaged in 45 disputes of which the result was indefinite or is not yet known.

For those disputes which began in 1896, and are now settled, the following table gives the proportion of workpeople who were successful or otherwise in each group of trades.

Trades.	Percentage of Workpeople engaged in Disputes in 1896 which have been settled who were			
	Successful.	Partially successful.	Unsuccessful.	Result Indefinite or not known.
Building	59.1	8.1	32.5	.3
Mining and Quarrying	20.0	39.1	37.5	3.4
Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding	47.4	26.6	23.4	2.6
Textile	38.1	12.9	48.7	.3
Clothing	43.9	39.2	12.9	4.0
Miscellaneous	39.0	27.1	32.6	1.3
All Trades	38.0	25.6	34.4	2.0

From this it appears that the building operatives were the most and the miners the least successful in obtaining their demands through disputes.

The following comparative table shows the relative degree of success and failure of the workpeople engaged in disputes in the past eight years.

Percentage of total number of workpeople engaged in disputes who were	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896
Successful	28.6	54.4	25.6	27.5	62.9	22.1	24.1	38.0
Partially successful	56.2	16.8	36.7	51.4	24.7	34.2	47.1	25.6
Unsuccessful	12.0	25.9	34.8	19.9	12.1	42.1	27.9	34.4
Result indefinite or not known	3.2	2.9	2.9	1.2	.3	1.6	.9	2.0

From this table it will be seen that the proportion of workpeople who were entirely successful in attaining their demands in 1896 was greater than in either of the two preceding years. On the other hand, the percentage who were entirely unsuccessful was somewhat higher in 1896 than in 1895.

DISPUTES IN THE ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING TRADES.

The improved state of employment in the engineering and shipbuilding industries on the North-east coast has, since the commencement of the year, given rise to numerous demands on behalf of various classes of workmen, for advanced wages and other improved conditions. As several of these movements have aroused public interest during the past month, some account is given below of the various stages through which they have passed.

(1) About the middle of January several trade unions of the various sections of unskilled labour employed in shipyards gave joint notice on behalf of their members for an advance of 10 per cent. on piece and time rates. On January 27th a conference between employers and the representatives of these unions was held at Sunderland. The employers offered an advance of 5 per cent. on piece prices, 1s. per week to men paid at 2s. and over, and 6d. per week to those under that figure. It was intended that all hammermen (or strikers) should receive 1s. A ballot vote of the men resulted in the rejection of the employers' offer. It being, however, explained that (as stated above) all hammermen would receive 1s. advance irrespective of their rate of wages, the men decided to prolong the notices and to take a further vote. Before this was done a considerable number of the men in some parts of the district, estimated at about 2,000 out of a total of about 12,000 acted on their notices, and for some days remained on strike in opposition to the orders of their executive, throwing idle also a considerable number of platers in the shipyards. The result of the ballot was, for accepting employers' offer, 2,367; against, 2,230. The employers' offer was therefore accepted.

(2) During the time covered by this movement the shipwrights of the district, numbering in all about 2,500, had given notice for an advance of 2s. 6d. per week. This request was considered also at the employers' meeting of January 27th, and an offer of an advance of 1s. 6d. per week was made. A ballot of the men was taken as to this proposal, which was eventually accepted.

(3) It is, however, in the engineering section of trades that the most serious complications have arisen, and disputes have taken place on questions affecting wages, conditions of overtime, special rates of pay to men employed on board ship away from the shop, the class of men to be employed to work certain machines, and other matters.

(a) A dispute has taken place between smiths employed in the shipyards and their employers.

It originated at Blyth in the beginning of January (notice having been given on December 1st), and thence extended to Stockton-on-Tees, and the Hartlepoons.

These workmen are mostly members of one of three unions, viz., the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Co-operative Smiths' Society, and the Associated Blacksmiths' Society. The cause of dispute was a demand for an advance in wages of 3s. per week. On December 27th a conference between the parties resulted in an offer by the employers of 1s. per week on time wages, and 5 per cent. on piece rates. This was accepted by the Associated and Co-operative Smiths, but rejected by those belonging to the Amalgamated Society in the Tees district. The reason given for the

demand of the men was that they wished to be raised to the same wage level as those on the Tyne. A further conference on January 22nd failed to effect a settlement, although the employers offered to give an immediate advance of 1s. per week on time wages to men in the Tees and Hartlepool district, and 5 per cent. on piece rates, and 1s. on time wages on February 17th. The Blyth dispute was settled by a conditional compromise on January 14th, but about ninety smiths were out in the Tees and Hartlepool district in the first week of February, including some of the members of the Associated and Co-operative Smiths, who came out in sympathy. The Joint Tyne, Wear, Tees, and Hartlepool Shipbuilders' Association now took the matter up, and on February 13th notices were posted that on the following week all the Amalgamated Society smiths employed in the shipyards of the whole district would be discharged if the men on strike did not return to work. This notice took effect on February 20th and 23rd, and involved 260 smiths, and an equal number of their strikers. The other members of the Society employed in the shipyards struck in sympathy with the smiths, to the number of 476, making a total of about 1,000 involved in the dispute. Before the lock-out, the smiths in the Elswick shipyard (Newcastle-on-Tyne) to the number of 80 gave notice for an advance of 2s. per week, and 7½ per cent. on piece rates.

On March 12th a further conference was held, at which the employers offered 1s. per week on time wages in the Tees district, together with 1s. 6d. on time rates, and 5 per cent. on piece rates in the Tyne, Wear, Tees, and Hartlepool districts. The men's representatives agreed to recommend the men to accept these terms, and a settlement has been arrived at on this basis.

(b) At the beginning of February the Amalgamated Society of Engineers gave notice to the engineering employers of the North-east coast for an advance of 2s. 6d. per week on time, and 10 per cent. on piece rates. On February 23rd representatives of the Society met the North-east coast employers, who made an offer of 1s. 6d. per week advance to men of 25s. per week and over, 1s. per week to men with less than 25s. per week, and 5 per cent. on piece work rates. This offer was submitted to a ballot of the men and rejected. A further meeting between representatives of the employers and of the men was held on March 4th, when the employers offered to extend the advance of 1s. 6d. per week to all those who have served their full apprenticeship as fitters, turners, or other skilled workmen, and who are recently out of their time. A further conference was held on March 11th, and another meeting has been arranged for the 15th.

(c) At Sunderland 26 engineers came out on strike on February 13th against a machine man working a horizontal boring machine. In addition to these complications there have been differences on the subject of overtime and other matters. And a strike of three turners has taken place at Barrow on a question of the rating of certain machines. On February 26th the Federation of Engineering Associations addressed a letter to the Executive of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, complaining of the aggressive action of the Society, and specifying six special instances of such action as follows:—

1. The strike of your members at the Sunderland Forge and Engineering Company (Limited), to enforce a demand for the displacement from machines of men who have been and still are working them to the satisfaction of the employers. 2. The partial strike of your members at the Naval Construction and Armaments Co. (Limited), Barrow, in furtherance of a demand to rate machines. 3. The complaint regarding the working of automatic grinding machines at the Elswick Ordnance Works, also lodging money allowance dispute with the same firm. 4. Trial trip wages and allowances dispute. 5. Arbitrary stoppages of overtime at Sunderland and the Hartlepoons. 6. Arbitrary restrictions of overtime on the Clyde, at Belfast and at Barrow.

The letter suggested a conference between the Executives of the Federation and of the Engineers, provided the men on strike at the Sunderland Forge and at Barrow resumed work by March 12th, and that the

conditions hitherto existing should not be interfered with during the negotiations.

Since then several letters have passed between the parties, but up to the date of going to press (March 15th) no meeting has been arranged. The engineers stated that they agreed to a conference, but declined to order their members to return to work at Sunderland Forge as a preliminary to such meeting, unless the employers agreed to suspend work on the machine in dispute pending the negotiations. This the employers declined, and at a meeting of the Employers' Federation at Carlisle on March 12th, it was decided to issue lock-out notices to the members of the Amalgamated Society.

THE LAW RELATING TO TRUCK.

A MEMORANDUM with regard to the Truck Acts for the use of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Mines and Factories has been issued as a Parliamentary paper. The paper is not to be regarded as an authoritative decision upon the law, but only as representing an opinion of what that law is. The following is an abridgment of this paper, together with a few explanatory observations. The law relating to Truck is contained in the Truck Act, 1831, the Truck Amendment Act, 1887, the Hosiery Manufacture (Wages) Act, 1874, and the Truck Act, 1896, and the full text of these Acts is given as an appendix. What the Act of 1831 forbade was not deductions from or omission to pay wages, but their payment otherwise than in coin. Hence fines were not prohibited, and subsequent decisions showed that deductions for materials, &c., were not made illegal by the Act*, under which wages were defined as "the reward of labour," and hence did not include materials supplied as a means to it.

The true construction of the Truck Act has been often a matter of doubt and controversy. At one time some expressions of opinion on the part of the Judges gave rise to the belief that fines were prohibited, but the case of Kelly v. Redgrave declared their legality, and the opinion of the Law Officers confirmed this view.

In determining whether a person is a workman within the scope of the Acts, regard must be had not merely to each detail that he does, but to the general scope of his employment. Thus a clerk, an omnibus conductor, or a shopman is not regarded as a workman, but a shop porter is. Shop assistants, though not touched by the former Acts, however, are specially included under Section 1 of the Act of 1896 which regulates fines. Agricultural labourers are under special provisions by the Act of 1887, Section 4. In addition to the protection accorded by the Truck Acts, colliers are under the check-weighing clauses of the Mines Acts; persons engaged in hosiery manufacture are under a special Act prohibiting deductions for frame rents; while women, young persons, and children are protected under the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875, from fines for absence or leaving work except to the amount of damage sustained by the employer. (This is in substance extended to all workmen by the Truck Act, 1896).

Inasmuch as the older Truck Acts left untouched the power of the employer to inflict unlimited fines, or to make unlimited deductions in respect of bad work, or for materials to be used as a means of the workman's work, it was thought expedient to restrict and regulate this power, and, therefore, by the Truck Act of 1896, it was provided that such fines and deductions for negligent work, or materials supplied, should be prohibited except under stringent conditions.

The provisions as to fines are as follows:—

- (1) No money shall be deducted from wages or payment made by the workman for or in respect of any fine, unless the terms are contained in a written contract signed by the workman, or else contained in a notice always kept in some place where it may be easily seen, read and copied.

*Archer v. James, 31, L.J.Q.B. 153 (1862).

It is to be observed here, that this section makes not only the deduction illegal, but the payment by the workman also illegal, and that the notice must be placed in a position in which it can be easily seen, read, and copied by everyone affected by it. It is open to the employer to change the notice from time to time, but such change would only affect future employment, respecting which at the time of the notice there was no existing contract.

- (2) The fines can only be fair and reasonable, and cannot be imposed except in respect of some acts reasonably likely to cause injury to the employer's business.
- (3) At the time when any deduction or payment is made in respect of any fine, particulars of it must be supplied in writing, otherwise an offence against the Act has been committed.

Deductions for bad or negligent work are under restrictions very similar to those imposed in the case of fines.

Deductions for materials supplied are also under similar restrictions. They must not exceed the fair value of the article supplied; by this is meant, in substance, that employers can only charge the workmen for such materials at cost price. It is not possible to lay down any definition of cost price which will meet every imaginable case, but what is intended is that the price shall be what it has actually cost to supply them, all reasonable expenses being taken into consideration; and that the employer shall not make any profit whatever out of the sale of materials to the workmen, except such incidental advantage as he may legitimately obtain by the use of proper materials in his business.

It is to be noted that—

- (1) Not only is it an offence to make an illegal deduction, or to receive an illegal payment, but also to make any contract for such deduction or payment. If, therefore, an employer posts a notice embodying excessive fines or other illegal deductions, and persons work under it, an offence will have been committed, although no illegal fine or other deduction may actually have been enforced.
- (2) A limitation of time, six months for taking civil proceedings, is imposed by the Act, whereas in the other Truck Acts no such limit is fixed.

Under former Truck Acts a workman who had improperly been paid part of his wages in goods, might keep the goods and sue for the money. This is still the case under the old Truck Acts. Under the Truck Act of 1896, however, that is to say, in any case where a fine, or deduction for fines or for bad work, or materials supplied, is made, the workman who has consented to it, can only recover the excess over what would have been a fair deduction. Under this Act, therefore, a workman is not entitled to go on for years, knowingly submitting to excessive deductions, and then claim to have them all repaid. He can only recover the amount by which they are held to be excessive.

Provision is made in this Act for production of any contracts involving fines or deductions for materials or bad work to the inspectors, and giving copies to workmen.

It is also enacted that a register shall be kept of all fines. This is an important provision, and it will be the Inspector's duty from time to time to look at such registers, and see that the fines and deductions therein do not appear excessive.

Summary penal proceedings under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts must be taken within six months of the offence.

No payment illegal under the older Truck Act is legalised by the Act of 1896.

The Inspectors are charged with the duty of seeing that the Truck Acts are not infringed in all factories, mines, and workshops inspected by them. It is desirable that prosecutions for contraventions of those Acts should be instituted by them.

In conclusion, the Memorandum observes, that the Truck Acts are for the protection of the workmen, especially the more ignorant or weak among them. It is not

intended that the Inspectors shall intervene in cases where it is quite clear that the workpeople are not in any way subject to any compulsion, and where they are receiving full value for their money. On the other hand, whenever a case of real hardship or compulsion is discovered, even though small, the Inspectors should not hesitate, first, to endeavour to induce employers to rectify any abuse that is complained of, or if they refuse, to take steps to compel them to obey the law.

It should be explained that the provision as to a placard gives the employer no new legal power. He was entitled before to put up a placard requiring fines to be paid, whether reasonable or not, and such placard bound those workmen who went on working with knowledge of it. Under the new Act this power is restricted, fines being illegal unless reasonable in amount. In case the workmen in any particular trade do not need protection, a power of exemption is given to the Secretary of State, the effect of such exemption being to make the law less strict against the employer.*

FRENCH FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

IN 1894.†

IN France there are three classes of Friendly Societies:—

(1) Authorised societies which have no civil rights, but are merely recognised as legal associations.

(2) Approved societies which have various civil rights, including the right to receive legacies, to rent land, and to own movable property, and are exempt from certain taxes and duties.

(3) Societies which are recognised as being of Public Utility, which have the same privileges as the approved societies, together with the right to own real property. They are comparatively few in number, and for the purposes of the following article are grouped with the approved societies.

At the end of 1894 there were 10,328 friendly societies, with 1,583,469 members, of whom, however, 236,765 were honorary members. This represents an increase in the year of 331 societies, and of 43,007 members. Of the 1,583,469 persons 1,207,659 were in 7,518 societies approved or recognised as of public utility, and 375,810 in 2,810 authorised societies. The men formed 81·2 per cent. of the membership, the women 15·8 per cent., and the children 3·0 per cent.

The following table, analysing the receipts and expenditure of the two classes of societies, is based on figures in the report:—

Nature of Receipts and Expenditure.	Approved Societies.	Authorised Societies.	Total.	Ditto per participating Member.
RECEIPTS.				
Subscriptions of Participating Members	£ 571,072	£ 214,954	£ 786,026	s. d. 11 8
Subscriptions of Honorary Members and Children	95,520	16,769	112,289	1 8
Interest on Capital	107,539	54,642	162,171	2 5
Subventions, Donations and Legacies	69,865	40,115	109,980	1 7½
Other Receipts	101,008	36,041	137,049	2 0½
Total Receipts	944,994	362,521	1,307,515	19 5
EXPENDITURE.				
On Sickness	455,477	158,637	614,114	9 1½
On Old, Infirm and Incurable Persons, Widows and Children	77,795	50,624	128,419	1 10½
To the Pension Fund	113,270	36,442	149,712	2 2½
Funeral Expenses	36,462	9,260	45,722	0 8½
Other Expenditure	126,925	37,741	164,666	2 5½
Total Expenditure	809,929	292,704	1,102,633	16 4½

Though in both the classes of societies the receipts from all sources exceeded the expenditure, the subscriptions of ordinary members were insufficient of themselves to meet the expenses. The deficiency ranged

* Under this part of the Act (Section 9), the Home Secretary has issued an Order, dated 3rd March, exempting from the provisions of the Act all branches of the weaving of cotton in Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

† Based mainly on information supplied by the courtesy of the French Labour Department.

from 3s. 2d. per head in the case of male members of approved societies to as much as 6s. 6d. per head, or nearly half the total expenditure in the case of women members of authorised societies. The figures given above show that the deficiency was more than covered by the receipts from various other sources.

As regards the pension fund it should be noted that of the 7,518 approved societies, 3,966 had a pension fund, whilst of the 2,810 authorised societies only 55 gave pensions. These 55 were societies which made the pension their principal object, none of them assuring against sickness.

The societies receive subventions both from the Department and from the Commune in which they are established. These subventions amounted in the aggregate in 1894 to £19,557, nearly the whole amount being paid to the approved societies.

The mean number of days' sickness per head in the approved societies was 5.19, and in the authorised societies 5.88. The mean number of days sickness for each sick person was 15.85 in the former group of societies, and 16.85 in the latter.

GERMAN LABOUR COLONIES.

As stated in the report on Agencies and Methods for dealing with the unemployed (C. 7,182 of 1893, PP. 269-307), the German Labour Colonies are institutions supported partly by subventions from provincial governments and municipalities, partly by voluntary contributions, for the reception of able-bodied men, who are allowed to remain for a limited period, in no case exceeding two years, though in some cases men, after staying for two years absent themselves for a few weeks, and then come back for a further two years, and are, in fact, permanent residents. The inmates of the Colonies, who are employed in reclaiming land and other occupations, receive, in addition to board and lodging, a small money payment, but their total remuneration (including board, lodging, clothes, &c.,) must be lower than the current wages of the locality.

At the end of 1896* there were 27 of these Colonies, with in all 2,918 inmates; the number of admissions in that year having been 7,646, and the departures numbering 7,806. The numbers in each month are shown below:—

Month.	Number of Admissions.	Number of Departures.	Number remaining at end of month.
January	663	688	3,043
February	585	851	2,777
March	571	1,045	2,302
April	612	987	1,927
May	576	577	1,926
June	543	679	1,800
July	542	590	1,752
August	521	636	1,637
September	549	481	1,705
October	809	438	2,076
November	963	459	2,588
December	712	382	2,918

The 7,646 admissions of 1896 comprised 4,917 separate individuals, of whom 2,353 had never been in a Colony; 1,118 had been in a Colony once; 552 twice; 359 three times; 192 four times; 138 five times; 69 six times and 136 more than six times before, the ages of these persons being as under:—

Ages.	No. of Admissions.	Per cent.
Under 15 years	3	—
Over 15 and " 17 "	53	0.7
" 17 " " 21 "	540	7.1
" 21 " " 30 "	1,500	19.7
" 30 " " 50 "	4,187	54.7
" 50 " " 60 "	1,138	14.9
60 years and over	225	2.9
Total	7,646	100.0

Of the 2,918 persons remaining in the Colonies on December 31st 1896, 1,473 had been there under two months, 718 over two and under four; 318 over four and under six; 264 over six and under twelve months;

* Particulars based mainly on the official organ (*Der Wanderer*, previously *Die Arbeiter-Kolonie*) of the Labour Colony Central Board.

and 145 over a year. The circumstances under which the 7,806 departures in 1896 took place were as shown below:—

	No.	Per cent.
Sent to situations found by Colonies	1,211	15.5
Went to situations found by themselves	889	11.4
Discharged at own desire	4,241	54.3
Dismissed for inefficiency or misconduct	870	11.2
Dismissed for other causes	382	4.9
Left without permission	190	2.4
Died	23	0.3
Total	7,806	100.0

RECENT CONCILIATION & ARBITRATION CASES AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS.

(a) CASES UNDER THE CONCILIATION ACT.

(1) Dispute in the Edinburgh Boot and Shoe Trade.

This dispute commenced on November 9th, when 73 members of the Cordwainers' Society, employed in the shops of a firm belonging to the Edinburgh Master Bootmakers' Association, went out on strike to prevent certain jobbing work (namely, Blake sewn work and Standard screw work), hitherto repaired in the shops by hand, being sent to a factory to be sewn by machinery by persons not belonging to the Cordwainers' Society.

On November 27th two firms, both belonging to the Master Bootmakers' Association, locked out their men, who were members of the Cordwainers' Society, to the number of 52, in support of the firm originally affected.

The men contended that the jobbing work sent to the factory from the shops in which they worked should be repaired there by members of their own society, whereas the workmen in the factory in question belonged to the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives. The Master Bootmakers' Association claimed that the work in question should be done in the factory by machinery on such terms as the owners of the factory could make with the union to which the men employed there belonged.

On February 5th, an application from the Master Bootmakers' Association was received by the Board of Trade to take action under the Conciliation Act with a view to settle the dispute. Accordingly an officer of the Department went to Edinburgh on February 15th, interviewed the various parties to the dispute, and on the 16th presided at a meeting at which were present representatives of the employers and of the Cordwainers' Society. Subsequently other meetings were held on February 20th and March 4th, at which the same parties or their representatives were present, and, in addition, representatives of the local branch of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives and their District Agent.

In consequence of an agreement arrived at between the Cordwainers' Society and the two firms which had locked out their men, work was resumed on their premises on February 26th. On March 4th a final conference of the parties was held under the presidency of the Board of Trade representative, at which the following agreement was signed on behalf of the parties to the dispute:—

1. The employers agree to have done on their premises all their repairing, excepting in the case provided for in Clause 4 of this agreement.
2. That for Blake sewn work or Standard screw work, they agree to accept the statement annexed to this agreement.*
3. Other classes of repairing to be paid according to hand-sewn statement.
4. That no repairing work will be sent out to a factory to be repaired unless the National Union and the Cordwainers' Society agree as to the conditions under which such work shall be done.
5. That a Conciliation Board be formed consisting of three members of the Employers' Association and three members of the Cordwainers' Society, which shall meet and discuss all questions of difference before either a strike or a lock-out is declared.
6. Any dispute arising as to the construction of the terms of this agreement to be left to the decision of Mr. Wilson Fox, of the Board of Trade.

* A statement of prices was agreed upon by the parties to be paid in the shops of the members of the Edinburgh Master Bootmakers' Association, and in the shops of the owners of the factory.

(2) Dispute at Galashiels (Woollen Weaving).

ON January 29th the weavers (30 in number) employed by a firm of woollen manufacturers at Galashiels struck work on account of the introduction of the system of one weaver working two looms, but three of these employees returned to work next day. The other 27 remained out; and, an attempt to settle the dispute by arbitration having fallen through, an application from the firm was received on February 22nd by the Board of Trade under the Conciliation Act of 1896. A representative of the Department accordingly visited Galashiels on February 24th; and, after several interviews with the representatives of the weavers and with the employers, terms of settlement were arranged between the parties on February 26th. The employers undertook that they would not, up to the end of 1897, attempt to introduce the two-loom system in regard to either the looms then in their mill or the new fast looms which they intend to put in, and would take back every weaver employed by them at the beginning of the dispute; and the strikers agreed to return to work on March 1st.

(3) Arbitration at the Ocean Collieries, South Wales.

ON April 30th, 1895, one of the collieries owned by the Ocean Colliery Company, Limited, Glamorgan, was closed owing to a dispute between employer and employed as to a proposed list of prices for the working of a seam then being opened up. The Colliery remained closed for twenty months until January 15th, 1897, when the representatives of the workmen and the Company made an agreement to refer the drawing up of a price list to two Arbitrators appointed by the two parties, who should appoint an umpire to determine points on which they failed to agree. The Arbitrators having failed to agree on an umpire, applied on February 22nd to the Board of Trade to appoint an umpire under the Conciliation Act, undertaking to accept and confirm such appointment. The Board of Trade accordingly, on February 25th, appointed Mr. Thomas Bell, formerly one of H.M. Inspectors of Mines, to act as umpire.

(b) OTHER CASES.

Bristol Board of Conciliation and Arbitration.

A meeting of this Board was held on March 1st for the consideration of a dispute between 5 members of the Glass Bevelers' and Cutters' Union and their employer. The men are paid partly by time and partly by piece rates, and the employers proposed to reduce the piece rates from March 1st. The men sought the services of the Board, and an amicable settlement was arrived at through its intervention. A slight alteration has been made upon the previous rates, the effect of which, however, on weekly wages is not great.

Agreement in the Bolton Cotton Trade.

ON January 28th the following agreement was signed by representatives of the Bolton and District Master Cotton Spinners' Association and the Bolton and District Card, Blowing, Ring and Throstle Room Operatives' Association:—

In the event of a dispute arising between employers and employed, regarding prices or general conditions of work or wages, the matter shall be referred to the secretaries of the two associations for adjustment, who shall take action within seven days from receipt of notice or complaint. Should, however, they fail to arrive at a settlement of the point at issue, the same shall be referred to the Joint Committee for their decision, such meeting to be called within 14 days from the secretaries failing to agree.

New Piece List for Twists and Drawing Velvets.

A new standard list of piece prices for twisting and drawing velvets came into operation in Oldham and District on January 1st of this year, having been agreed upon in December last by a Joint Committee of the Oldham Master Cotton Manufacturers' Association and the Amalgamated Association of Beamers, Twisters, and Drawers. The list, which is said to give a slight advance to the workpeople, applies to velvets only, all other sorts, such as velveteens, fustians, cords, &c., not being affected. About 100 workpeople are paid by the new list.

LABOUR CASES IN FEBRUARY.

THE following are among the more interesting legal cases of the month, specially affecting labour. The accounts are based principally upon reports appearing in local newspapers.

(1) EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT.*

Defective Plant.—This was a cross-appeal by the plaintiff, a workman who had been injured by a circular saw, from the verdict and judgment of the County Court in an action under Sections (1) and (3) of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880. The judge non-suited the plaintiff on his claim under the first sub-section on the ground that the machine was not imperfect or defective. He left the case under Sub-section 3—i.e., as to conforming to orders of a person in authority—to the jury. On this the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff for £118. The defendants appealed against this, and the plaintiff appealed against the non-suit. The appeal of the defendants was successful on the ground that there was no evidence of direct orders having been given by a person in charge, and the Court also held that the plaintiff was entitled to succeed on his appeal. The facts of the case were that the plaintiff was injured by a circular saw revolving on a bench, part being above and part below. The bench was fitted with a plank or shutter at the side of the table as a fence, to protect persons from the part of the saw which was underneath it. At the time of the accident the shutter had been removed for the purpose of removing the sawdust, and had been absent a month or more, and during this period the plaintiff slipped and his leg came in contact with the saw. It had been argued for the defendants that there was no defect in the machinery, because the bench had been fitted with the shutter, and that it there was negligence in not replacing it, that did not constitute a defect. The question for the Court was whether the fact of the absence of the shutter at the time of the accident constituted a defect in the saw bench. The Court held that there was no distinction to be drawn, because the guard was sometimes fixed and sometimes not, especially when the guard was taken off for any purpose connected with the proper working of the machine. The condition of machinery meant the state of the machinery at the time of the accident. If there was a defect in its condition at the time of the accident, it was immaterial (apart from the question of negligence) how long the defect had existed. The case of *Willetts v. Watt* (1892, 2 Q. B., 61 and 7 Q. B., 540), where it was said that the defect must be "chronic" or "somewhat chronic," was held not to apply to this case.—*Queen's Bench Division, Divisional Court, February 1st.*

A question of liability.—In this case actions by certain parties had been brought against a railway company and an iron and steel company for payment of large damages in respect of the death of three platelayers and injuries to another, caused by an accident due to wagons leaving the line. The platelayers were in the employment of the iron and steel company. The railway company replied that the wagons were not their property, and that they were not responsible for the up-keep and conduct of the lines of rails where the accident occurred. The iron and steel company stated that, if there was any fault, it was that of the railway company. Both sets of defenders pleaded contributory negligence. In disposing of the question of issues, the Court held that there was a well-laid case against the railway company, but not against the iron and steel company. The operations which miscarried were conducted with the plant and by the servants of the railway company. The action against the iron and steel company was dismissed.—*Court of Session, First Division, February 3rd.*

(2) FACTORY ACTS.

Limewashing.—A firm of cotton spinners was prosecuted for not complying with an order made upon defendants to limewash the ceilings of their factory. The defendants had, however, put limewater upon the ceilings, and they contended that, as it was sufficient for cleanliness and sanitary purposes, they had complied with the Act of Parliament. Washing ceilings with limewater had, it was stated, the further advantage that it did not drop off and injure machinery, as in the case of lime put on in the old-fashioned style. The Bench convicted, and imposed a fine of 5s. and costs.—*Hyde Borough Court, February 11th.*

(3) COAL MINES REGULATION ACT.

Matches in a Mine.—The agent and managing director of a colliery company was summoned by the Inspector of Mines, under Sub-section 4 of General Rule 10 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which provides that "a person shall not have in his possession any lucifer match or apparatus of any kind for striking a light, except with a completely closed chamber attached to the fuse of the shot" in the mine. Defendant, who had himself informed the Inspector of his possession of the matches, pleaded guilty, and stated that he had been careless. Fined £5 and costs.—*Wigan County Police Court, February 5th.*

Approaching a shot after it has missed fire.—A workman in a limestone quarry was summoned for breaking a special rule, which states that, if a shot has apparently missed fire, no person shall be allowed to go near it for half an hour, except by written permission, or except where electricity has been used. When a shot has missed fire, a person shall give warning of the same, and it shall not be unrammed, bored or picked out until the time in question has elapsed. The defendant, after firing a shot from which

* Under this heading are also included actions at Common Law to recover from employers compensation for injuries to workpeople.

there was no report, went towards the hole, though warned not to do so. Fined 20s., including costs.—*Buxton Police Court, February 20th.*

(4) MISCELLANEOUS.

A Jewish baker was fined 10s. and two guineas costs in one case, for having on the Lord's Day made delivery of certain bread, otherwise than within his shop, and in another case was fined 1s. and costs for having on the Lord's Day made and baked bread contrary to the statute of 3, George IV., c. 106.—*Worship-street Police Court, February 3rd. The Guildhall (London), February 5th.*

DIVIDENDS ON PURCHASES PAID BY CO-OPERATIVE DISTRIBUTIVE SOCIETIES.

RETURNS showing the rates of dividend paid to members on purchases have been received for the fourth quarter of 1896 from 809 co-operative distributive societies in the United Kingdom, with a total membership of 1,141,258, as compared with 825 societies, with a total membership of 1,004,005, making returns for the corresponding period of 1895. The societies making returns are those doing the main bulk of co-operative retail trade, and the table appended may be taken as giving a fairly accurate view of the dividends paid to members by the whole of the distributive societies in the United Kingdom.

The rates of dividend shown are those paid upon the main volume of trade. In a few cases societies paid a higher or lower dividend upon purchases from minor departments, such as butchery, drapery, &c.

With very few exceptions the societies paid a dividend to non-members at one half the rate paid to members.

Table showing the number and membership of Co-operative Societies paying the undermentioned rates of dividend per £1 of purchases in fourth quarter of year 1896:—

Rates of dividend per £1 of purchases.	Number of Societies.			Membership of Societies making returns in 4th quarter of 1896.		Percentage for corresponding period of 1895.
	England and Wales.	Scotland and Ireland.	Total.	Number.	Percentage.	
No dividend	5	—	5	890	0.1	0.1
Sixpence and under ...	7	—	7	2,308	0.2	0.3
Over 6d. but not exceeding 1s.	22	1	23	11,410	1.0	1.0
" 1s 0d " " 1s 6d.	51	1	52	25,371	2.2	3.0
" 1 6 " " 2 0	106	9	115	127,741	11.1	10.6
" 2 0 " " 2 6	96	16	112	187,329	16.4	17.5
" 2 6 " " 3 0	161	37	198	447,284	37.5	41.8
" 3 0 " " 3 6	143	35	178	253,602	22.3	18.2
" 3 6 " " 4 0	66	26	92	95,583	8.4	6.5
" 4 0 " " 4 6	16	4	20	6,670	0.6	0.8
" 4 6 " " 5 0	3	2	5	1,472	0.1	0.2
" 5 0 " " " " "	2	—	2	1,438	0.1	—
Totals	678	131	809	1,141,258	100.0	100.0

The figures given in the above table show an average dividend of 2s. 8.46d. in the £ on purchases in the fourth quarter of 1896, as compared with 2s. 7.85d. in the corresponding period of 1895.

Fourth International Congress on Workmen's Accidents and Workmen's Insurance.—It has been officially announced that the fourth International Congress on Workmen's Accidents and Workmen's Insurance will be held in Brussels from the 26th to the 31st of next July. The first three congresses were held at Paris (1889), Berne (1891), and Milan (1894). Intending participants should communicate with M. Louis Wodon, Secrétaire du Comité d'Organisation du Congrès International des Accidents du Travail et des Assurances Sociales, 2 rue Latérale, Bruxelles. The minimum subscription is 10 francs (about 8s.).

Recent Publications of the Emigrants' Information Office.—A handbook upon the South African Republic, issued by the Emigrants' Information Office, contains general information for intending emigrants as to the climate, constitution and chief towns; as to the cost of living and of travelling; the rates of wages and demand for labour, and other matters. A summary of Consular reports of 1896 from North and South America, containing extracts likely to be useful to intending emigrants has also been issued.

Both publications can be obtained (twopence each) from the Chief Clerk, Emigrants' Information Office, 31 Broadway, Westminster.

LABOUR IN THE COLONIES.

(Monthly report, compiled by the Emigrants' Information Office, 31 Broadway, Westminster, S.W., from official and other reports, newspapers, &c., mostly dated January and February last.)

Canada.—Intending emigrants should now prepare to start, as April is the beginning of the busy season in Canada, but there is no demand for anyone except for farmers with a little capital, for experienced agricultural labourers, and (except at Toronto) for female domestic servants. Mechanics are not wanted, and at Toronto there have been more men out of employment and destitute than has been the case for years.

New South Wales.—Coalminers have been very busy at Newcastle, and at the Southern collieries.

Victoria.—A report from Castlemaine states that there is a fair demand for gold miners, but that in all other trades the demand for labour is dull. Another from Collingwood, a suburb of Melbourne, states: "There is no demand for any description of labour at the present time." At Nathalia, in an excellent fruit and agricultural district, 147 miles N.E. of Melbourne, "there is a very good demand for steady men" on farms.

South Australia.—A report from Adelaide states that there is a demand from time to time, for bricklayers and carpenters, and for men in the metal and furniture trades, but that—speaking generally—there are always men to be found, when wanted, in almost every branch of labour. The demand, however, for cooks and other female servants is greater than the supply.

Queensland.—A report from Charters Towers in the North states: "It is no use any one coming here; the labour market is congested, except for female servants, for whom there is a good demand." At Warwick, in the South, the demand for labour is slight except for domestic servants. A report from the Herbert River, in the North, states that there is no demand there for ordinary emigrants except domestic servants, and adds that persons with capital might succeed as sugar farmers. Work in the clothing factories is increasing gradually, and it is stated that there are now few competent workers unemployed, or even only partially employed.

Western Australia.—A reduction of miners' wages by 5s. to 10s. a week has been notified at some of the mines at Coolgardie; this proposed reduction is being resisted by the men. Building operations at Coolgardie are brisk.

New Zealand.—Work at Auckland has been plentiful, and all the factories and mills have been working full-handed. Building operations continue on a good scale, more particularly in country work. In most other parts also of the Colony—both in large towns and in country districts—employment has been good, more especially in the building trades, as is usually the case during the summer season; shearers, harvesters, and farm hands have been equally busy, but with the completion of shearing and harvesting the demand for these has now slackened off. There is a possibility of trouble arising between builders and bricklayers, the latter demanding an increase of wages to 12s. a day. The Seamen's Union is also claiming an increase of £1 a month to their wages.

Cape Colony.—Sixty foremen or signalmen at 8s. a day, 30 shunters at 6s. 8d., and 30 guards at 7s. 6d., are wanted for the Cape railways. The engagement is for three years. A free passage to the Colony is given. Signalmen and guards must have knowledge of telegraphy and single line working. Candidates must not be more than 28 years old, and must apply by letter, endorsed "Railway Servants," to the Agent-General for the Cape of Good Hope, 112 Victoria-street, London, S.W. The strike of printers at Cape Town still continues. The carpenters and plumbers are agitating to have their wages raised from 11s. to 13s. a day, and the masons are claiming an increase of 1s. a day on the standard rate of 11s., and also a reduction in the hours of work.

Natal.—A report from Pietermaritzburg states that trade is fair, but that there is not much demand for more mechanics, as there are plenty in the town.

* Handbooks, with maps on the different Colonies, may be obtained from the Emigrants' Information Office at a penny each, post free.

LABOUR ABROAD.

FRANCE*.

Coal Mining in January.—The average number of days per week on which coal was hewn and wound in January was 6.08, as compared with 5.57 in the previous month. In January full time (six days and over), was worked by 92 per cent., and from five to six days by 8 per cent. of the miners, while in the previous month the percentages were 6 and 93 respectively. The pits making these returns employ over three-fourths of the coal miners of France.

Labour Disputes in February.—The French Labour Department was notified of 26 disputes in February, as compared with 15 in the preceding month and 36 in February 1896. In addition, 5 disputes begun in January, were outstanding. The number of persons known to have participated in 21 of the 26 new disputes was 3,517. Thirteen disputes were in the textile trades, 3 among metal-workers, 2 among miners, and the rest in unclassified trades. All except 2 were confined to single establishments. One of the exceptions was a strike of cotton weavers of Cholet (Maine-et-Loire), begun on the 13th of February, and involving 430 operatives in 7 establishments, the demand being for a uniform scale of wages. By the 1st of March the operatives at 5 of these establishments had come to terms with their employers. A strike of 500 weavers at an establishment in Saint-Quentin (Aisne) for the re-instatement of a sub-manager lasted from the 8th to the 13th of February, and was unsuccessful. Fifteen disputes had reference to wages questions—including 10 demands for increased wages—and 8 to the dismissal or re-instatement of workpeople or overseers. In 2 cases the abolition of fines was demanded, and in 1 the maintenance of the day-wage system, 1 had reference to workshop rules, and in 1 case the cause has not been ascertained. (Two disputes, each involving 2 demands, are here counted twice.)

The workpeople were successful in 2, partially successful in 4, and unsuccessful in 10 out of 17 disputes terminated in February, the result being in one case undecided.

Conciliation and Arbitration in February.—Attempts to apply the Conciliation and Arbitration Law were made in four cases. In the first—a strike of 23 combmakers against a new working rule—the disputants met before the *juge de paix*, whom the workers had asked to intervene, but the employer announced that he had found substitutes for the majority of the strikers, and that he saw no need for arbitration. In the second case the *juge de paix* intervened—but without success—on behalf, and at the request, of 12 hosiery workers, who had lost their situations through remaining on strike after their colleagues had resumed work. In the third case a strike of 58 puddlers—for increased wages—was settled in the presence of the *juge de paix*, who intervened at the request of the men, a slight increase of wages being conceded. In the fourth case—a strike of masons and labourers—both sides accepted arbitration after two unsuccessful attempts to effect a settlement by conciliation. It is not stated from which side the initiative for mediation came in this case.

GERMANY.

Labour Disputes in February.—The number of disputes reported on in the *Deutscher Reichs-Anzeiger* in February was 24, of which 19 were mentioned for the first time. Of these 19 disputes, 5 were in the woodworking and furnishing trades, 4 in the building trades, 2 among textile operatives, and 8 in unclassified trades. Some 900 workpeople were said to be involved in 9 of the newly-reported disputes, the most serious of which appears to have been a strike of 320 carpenters employed on the exhibition buildings in Leipsic, whose chief demand was for an increase of the minimum hourly wage from 5.4d. to 6d. The largest of the employers having conceded this demand, the strike was speedily terminated.

The dispute in the boot and shoe trade in Weissenfels (see February GAZETTE, p. 42) has terminated. Increases of wages amounting in the average to 4½ per cent. on the old rates, are said to have been granted.

Special Rules for the Manufacture of Bi-chromate of Potash and
*Information supplied through the courtesy of the French Labour Department

Bi-chromate of Soda.—The *Deutscher Reichs-Anzeiger* of February 5th contains the text of special rules issued by the Federal Council on February 2nd for establishments manufacturing these substances. The rules, which take effect from the 1st of next July, prohibit the employment of women and young persons under the age of 16 under conditions in which they would come into contact with the chromates, or of any person not provided with a medical certificate showing freedom from broken skin, sores, &c. The employer must engage a doctor to inspect the workpeople at least once a month. Measures are prescribed for preventing the penetration of dust or vapour into the workrooms—e.g., the use of a covered apparatus in grinding chrome ore, etc.—for the immediate removal of all traces of chromate from the workrooms and premises by cleansing, and for the provision of special working clothes, and respirators, &c., and of suitable lavatory accommodation for facilitating cleanliness on the part of the operatives.

Unemployed Insurance in Cologne.—From statements made at meetings of the Society for Insurance against Want of Work in Cologne (see GAZETTE of June 1896, p. 179), held in January and February, it appears that, up to the end of last August—the time limit fixed for the receipt of applications for insurance—229 persons had applied, nine of whom were pronounced ineligible. The date for beginning the payment of the unemployed benefit was December 15th, 1896, between which and February, 10th, 1897 the benefit was claimed by 93 of the insured, for 55 of whom work had been found, while 36 were still in receipt of the benefit and two were awaiting it, not having been on the books for five days. Benefits amounting in all to £89 had been paid to 73 persons.—*Sociale Praxis.*

Württemberg Municipal Labour Registries in January.—The municipal labour registries in Würtemberg—now numbering 12, owing to the establishment of a registry at Reutlingen on January 1st—found situations for 1,006 persons (676 men and 330 women) in that month. The situations applied for by workpeople numbered 5,850, and those offered by employers 2,071.

Operations of Public Labour Registries in February.—The journal *Sociale Praxis* has commenced the publication of monthly statistics of the operations of public labour registries, based on returns which a large number of these institutions have agreed to supply regularly.

The total number of situations offered by employers in February at 24 of the municipal or municipally-subsidized registries which have sent returns was 12,113, compared with 12,193 in the preceding month and 10,812 in February 1896.

The number of situations sought by workpeople during the month was 17,323, compared with 18,293 in the previous month and 16,538 in February 1896. The number of situations found was 8,923, compared with 9,212 in the previous month and 7,746 in February 1896. (This last set of figures is subject to some deduction, since in some registries a situation found is counted twice—viz., once to the employer and once to the workman.)

Municipal Labour Registry in Mainz.—After negotiations which have lasted over a year, the Municipal Assembly of Mainz has approved the statutes for a municipal labour registry. The controlling council is to consist of the Mayor, as chairman, with four representatives of employers and four of workers elected by the Town Council. At least three of the members elected from each class must belong to the Industrial Court and the fourth to the Town Council. In cases of dispute the registry will suspend operations if the Industrial Court has been asked to arbitrate. Should that body fail to arrive at a decision, the operations of the registry will be resumed.—*Sociale Praxis.*

BELGIUM.*

Employment in February.—The restriction of output in Cotton Weaving mills reported in January was continued on an increased scale in February, and threatened to extend to Cotton Spinning mills in which until recently there was plenty of work. Flax Spinning mills are accumulating stocks, but so far their output has not been affected by this circumstance. A degree of slackness exceeding what might be expected at this season prevails in the Woollen trade, in which night work has been entirely suspended. Smelting and Coalmining remain very busy. A general increase in the wages of coalminers is expected at the end of March. The Paper and Plate Glass trades are also busy; in other branches of Glassmaking employment is fair. The Cycle trade is making headway in new directions, and giving special attention to export business. The seasonal revival of the Clothing and Building trades has begun.

Labour Disputes in February.—Ten new strikes, affecting some 650 workpeople, were reported to the Belgian

* Supplied through the courtesy of the Belgian Labour Department by Dr. F. Vercrussse.

Labour Department in February. All of the disputes were confined to single establishments in different trades, and, with the exception of two, had terminated by the 12th of March. Among these disputes three were for an increase and three against a reduction of wages. Four of the eight strikes which have terminated were entirely unsuccessful; one was completely and three partially successful, one of the last-named disputes being settled through the arbitration of a Council of Industry and Labour.

Strike of Gasworkers.—A strike of 186 workpeople took place on March 1st at the Brussels Gasworks and ended on March 11th in the failure of the men, only 33 of whom were reinstated. The men demanded three eight-hour shifts instead of two shifts of twelve hours. The supply of gas to the city was not interrupted.

Workmen Inspectors of Mines.—The Chamber of Representatives has passed the Government Bill for appointing workmen inspectors of mines, to be selected by the Government from among workmen who have reached the age of 30, and served at least five years as miners or foremen. An amendment, proposing their election by the workmen, was rejected.

HOLLAND.

Regulation of Employment of Women and Young Persons.—In accordance with the provisions of Art. IV. of the law of May 5th, 1889 (amended by the law of July 20th 1895), a Royal Decree was issued on January 21st 1897, regulating the employment of women and of young persons under the age of 16. The following summary is based on a translation of the Decree, furnished to the Foreign office by Mr. Howard, H.M. Minister at the Hague, under date of February 17th.—No woman or young person may be employed in any manufactory or workshop in oiling, cleaning, repairing, adjusting, &c., mill-gearing in motion, or machinery (whether in motion or not) if danger be incurred in doing so. A signal must sound before mill-gearing or power-driven machinery is put in motion. The employment of women and young persons is forbidden in any closed spaces in which the temperature rises above 89°6 Fahr. Where such persons are employed the dangerous parts of machinery must be fenced so far as in the judgment of the inspector, the work permits. (Power looms when the shuttles make more than 80 throws per minute are regarded as dangerous machinery.) Precautions for safety are enjoined in connection with the use of hot or corrosive liquids, hot or molten metal, explosive gases, uncovered water tanks, &c.; otherwise the employment of women and young persons is prohibited. They may not be employed in work places deficient in light, or exposed without protection to the direct rays of the sun. Their employment is also prohibited in certain trades where poisonous compounds are habitually prepared, where injurious vapours arise, or where the atmosphere may be contaminated by dust, unless they be provided with a medical certificate that their health will not be specially endangered thereby and adequate measures be taken to prevent injury to health. A minimum amount of air space is specified for certain unhealthy trades, the Minister of Industry being empowered under certain restrictions to grant exemptions. In certain trades of this class the suitable provision of lavatories is required, and in a specified class of industries of this nature (including typefoundry and cigar making), women and young persons may not take their meals in the workplace. Women and young persons may not be employed underground in mines. No young person may be employed as engine-man or stoker, except as assistant to some other person, nor in the preparing or working up of explosives (if such work be dangerous in the opinion of the inspector) nor in the drawing, pushing, or carrying loads requiring an excessive amount of exertion, nor in carrying out dangerous experiments.

Co-operative Societies in Holland and its Colonies.—The Year book of the Netherlands Co-operative Federation for 1897* contains information respecting 595 Co-operative Societies in Holland, and her Colonies as compared with 493 a year ago. The figure is stated to be given under a certain reserve, being probably too high; as, in the absence of a legal obligation to register the dissolution (such as exists in regard to the formation) of a Society, the Federation has no means of informing itself of all the cases in which Societies have ceased to exist. On January 1st 1897, 32 Societies were affiliated to the Federation (compared with 29 a year before),

* Jaarboek Van Den Nederlandschen Cooperatieven Bond. Zeven de Jaargang 1897. Voor rekening van den Ned. Coop. Bond. 's Gravenhage, 1897.

viz., 28 distributive, 3 productive, and one building society. Of the 28 affiliated distributive Societies 23 are members of, and obtain goods from the "Commercial Chamber" of the Federation in Rotterdam.

The following statement shows particulars with regard to the above 23 distributive societies in each year from 1890 to 1895:—

Years.	Total Membership on Dec. 31st.	Total value of purchases from "Commercial Chamber" in each year (May to May).	Total Value of Sales.
1890	No. 8,529	£ 43,875	£ 165,990
1891	9,045	44,865	178,871
1892	9,742	47,591	183,977
1893	10,160	49,299	189,054
1894	11,091	50,582	199,668
1895	11,959	53,951	211,635

The capital of the "Commercial Chamber" amounts to £953, of which £63 constitutes a reserve fund. The federation also has a "Consultative Chamber" for discussion, publication, &c.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

Labour Disputes in February.—In the chief papers published by Austrian employers' and workmen's associations* reports appeared in February of seven new disputes and of ten remaining unsettled since previous months. The most noteworthy among the latter were the disputes in the mining industry at Anina (Hungary), and in the porcelain industry at Dallwitz, referred to in last month's GAZETTE (p. 43), neither of which has been reported as settled. Among the newly-reported disputes special mention need only be made of two—a strike of some 500 workpeople at a barge-building establishment in Buda-Pesth, for increased wages, and a strike of 283 workers at a sawmill in Linz. The last-mentioned strike was unsuccessful after lasting a week.

New Industrial Courts.—By a law† dated November 27th, 1896, and taking effect from July 1st, 1898, provisions, superseding the enactments at present in force, have been made for the settlement of certain classes of disputes between industrial employers and their employees, or among the employees of any such employer. The disputes in question are principally those arising out of claims in respect of existing conditions of employment (as distinguished from disputes as to what such conditions shall be in the future). Except in cases in which a settlement has been effected by a reference, agreed to by both parties, to a trade guild (see GAZETTE, December 1895, p. 370), the parties to a dispute are required to bring the matter before an Industrial Court established under the new law, or if no competent Industrial Court exists within the district, before the ordinary District Court. Each of the new Industrial Courts (which are to be established where similar courts now exist, and in such other places as may be ordered by the Ministry of Justice, after consulting the Provincial Diet concerned) is to consist of a chairman (if needful, also a deputy-chairman) appointed by that Ministry from lawyers qualified to hold judicial office, and of at least 10 assessors, elected one-half by the employers, one-half by the employees of the district in the trades concerned. Assessors, who are bound to serve, if elected, must not be under 30 years of age; their out-of-pocket expenses (including workmen's wages) are refunded, but they receive no remuneration. The decisions of an Industrial Court will be without appeal up to 50 florins (say £4 3s. 4d.).

A noteworthy change introduced by the new law is, that the administrative authorities are only allowed to retain their jurisdiction in dealing with differences between domestic servants or agricultural employees and their employers.

ITALY.

Co-operative Societies and Public Contracts.—The Commission which has been examining the question of amending the law of July 11th, 1889 (see GAZETTE of December, 1896, p. 374), has now issued its report.† Under this law certain privileges are allowed to associations of workmen for production and labour working on a co-operative basis, to facilitate their undertaking contracts for the Government up to the value of £4,000.

* Including Die Industrie (the organ of the Federation of Austrian Manufacturers' Associations), Das Handels-Museum, Die Gewerkschaft, Die Arbeiter-Zeitung, and others.

† Gesetz vom 27ten November 1896, betreffend die Einführung von Gewerbe-gerichten und die Gerichtsbarkeit in Streitigkeiten aus dem gewerblichen Arbeits- und Lohnverhältnisse. No. 218. Reichsgesetzblatt, December 5, 1896.

† Atti della Commissione nominata con Decreto 1º Settembre, 1896, del Ministro del Tesoro (Luzzatti) per lo studio delle Modificazioni da portarsi all' Art. 4 della Legge 11 luglio, 1889, n. 6216. (Appalti alle Società Cooperative di Produzione e lavoro.) Rome, G. Bertero, via Umbria, 1896.

REPORTS ON SPECIAL INDUSTRIES.

(a) COAL MINING IN FEBRUARY.

(NOTE.—The following tables only profess to state the number of days (allowance being made in all the calculations for short days) on which coal was hewn and wound at the collieries included in the returns received. It is not necessarily implied that all the persons employed at these collieries worked the whole number of days.)

Summary.—Employment in this industry was good in February. In every district the average of days worked per week was higher than during February 1896, and in nearly every district higher than during January 1897, although in Northumberland there was a falling off of about one-fifth of a day. All classes of coal gave better employment than during the preceding month.

Returns received respecting 1,305 pits, employing 414,241 persons, show that during the four weeks ended February 20th an average of 5.34* days per week was worked, as compared with 5.15 days in January and 4.91 days in February 1896. The following table gives the average number of days worked in each division of the United Kingdom.

District.	No. employed in Feb. 1897 at the Collieries included in the Table.	Average number of days worked per week by the pits in four weeks ended		
		20th Feb. 1897.	22nd Feb. 1896.	23rd Jan. 1897.
England and Wales	378,961	5.33	4.92	5.17
Scotland	34,687	5.47	4.84	4.89
Ireland	593	5.05	4.58	5.04
United Kingdom	414,241	5.34	4.91	5.15

The following table gives the average number of days worked in the pits, classified according to the class of coal principally raised. It will be seen that in every class of coal employment was better in February than in January, the improvement being most marked in the case of gas coal.

Description of Coal.	No. employed in Feb. 1897 at the Collieries included in the Table.	Number of days worked per week.		Increase(+) or Decrease(-) in Feb. 1897.
		February 1897.	January 1897.	
Coking Coal	25,314	5.57	5.29	+28
Gas "	32,010	5.53	5.11	+42
House "	76,168	5.23	4.99	+24
Manufacturing Coal... ..	17,827	5.39	5.02	+37
Steam "	132,808	5.32	5.23	+94
Mixed "	130,054	5.34	5.11	+23
All Classes of Coal	414,241	5.34	5.15	+19

If the workpeople be classified according to the number of days worked by the pits at which they were employed, it will be seen that 79.5 per cent. were employed at pits working 5 or more days per week as compared with 68.9 per cent. in January and 55.1 per cent. in February 1896.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE WORKPEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF DAYS WORKED IN FOUR WEEKS BY THE COLLIERIES.

Number of days on which Coal was hewn and wound in four weeks.	February 1897.		Corresponding percentages in—	
	No. of Workpeople employed.	Percentage proportion to total.	February 1896.	January 1897.
24 days (full time)	68,535	15.3	9.0	6.5
20 and under 24 days	265,924	64.2	46.1	62.4
16 " " 20 " "	64,148	15.5	28.2	25.2
12 " " 16 " "	17,435	4.2	13.2	5.1
8 " " 12 " "	2,747	.7	2.9	.7
Under 8 days	452	.1	.6	.1
Total	414,241	100.0	100.0	100.0

The number of workpeople now employed at pits covered by the returns is greater by 9,760 (or 2.4 per cent.) than a year ago. In England and Wales there is an increase of 9,801 and in Ireland of 80; in Scotland the numbers have decreased by 121.

Comparison by Districts.—In every district the time worked was greater than a year ago. The improvement amounted to three-quarters of a day or over in

* Allowance is made in all the calculations for short days.

The principal amendments recommended by the Commission are as follows:—

That the maximum value of the contracts be raised from £4,000 to £8,000; that, besides Government contracts, the law be made applicable to those of other public administrations (provincial, communal, &c.); that, with respect to the condition previously imposed, that, in order to entitle a society to the privileges conferred by the law, it must consist exclusively of workmen engaged in the trades to carry on which it was formed, a society shall be allowed to include workmen in any trade, and also, under certain conditions, persons entrusted with duties of technical and administrative direction who need not be workmen; that in future one-half (instead of, as at present, 10 per cent.) of the workmen employed by a society on a public contract may be non-members, such non-members being given a share in the profits proportionate to the work done by them; and that, in the place of Prefects of provinces, the authorities for deciding whether or not a society fulfils the conditions requisite to entitle it to the privileges of the law, be boards of four members, of whom two shall be public functionaries and two representatives of co-operative societies in the province, presided over by the Prefect or his deputy.

Statistics given in the appendix to the Report show that from 1889 to the end of 1895, 908 contracts, of a total value of £547,214, were obtained by 179 societies.

La Cooperazione Italiana, of February 27th, reports that contracts for the maintenance of the streets in five out of twelve of the divisions of the City of Naples have been placed by the municipality with five co-operative labour societies. The legality of this step, which was contested by the former contractors, has, it is said, been confirmed by the Ministry of the Interior. It appears that hitherto municipal authorities have acted on the assumption that they did not possess the power to make contracts by private treaty with co-operative societies. (See Report on Contracts given out by Public Authorities to Associations of Workmen. C.—8233 of 1896, p. 160.)

UNITED STATES.

CHICAGO CONSULAR DISTRICT.

The following is based on a report prepared for the Foreign Office by Mr. A. G. Vansittart, H.M. Consul at Chicago, under date of February 18th:—

The Strike of Silver Miners in Leadville (Colorado).—At the date of reporting, this strike had already lasted for over seven months, and was still in progress. Through the efforts of a new State Governor, appointed since the dispute was last reported on (see GAZETTE of January 1897, p. 10), the first meeting between the mine managers and the strikers was brought about, but the latter refused to accept the mine owners' terms.

Other Disputes.—The threatened extension of the strike at a printing works in Chicago, to which reference was made in the January GAZETTE (p. 10), has taken place, and the dispute has become a serious affair.

Owing to the announcement on February 1st of a 10 per cent. reduction in wages, a number of workpeople engaged at Maywood in manufacturing tin and japanned ware and machinery have struck. There are about 800 people employed by the firm. It is said that under the new scale many piece workers in various departments will only be able to earn 3s. 3d. a day, instead of 4s. 1d. as hitherto. The strikers demand the retention of the old scale.

A general strike at a number of the larger tanneries in Chicago broke out on the 17th of February, owing to the employers having announced their intention to reduce wages by 5 to 15 per cent., and to extend the working day from 9 to 10 hours. The projected change affects some 2,000 workmen.

Reduction of Steelworkers' Wages.—A general wage reduction, notified more than a month beforehand, was put into effect quietly by the Illinois Steel Company on the 2nd of February at Joliet, Milwaukee and South Chicago. The reduction amounts to 10 per cent. in most cases. Tonnage men are not affected. Machinists, carpenters and others are also reduced 10 per cent. The common labourers are only reduced from 5s. 2d. to 4s. 11d. a day. Salaries of draughtsmen, who received £30 18s. 9d. per month, were reduced to £20 12s. 6d.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—SPECIAL INDUSTRIES.

four districts, viz., Cumberland, Fife, North Wales, and Salop, Worcester and Warwick. In six other districts the improvement amounted to half (but under three-quarters) of a day. The least improvement took place in South Wales and Monmouth and in Durham. As compared with January the Lothians and West Scotland, which were, however, affected by the New Year holidays, exhibit the greatest improvement. In all districts with two exceptions employment improved during the month. In Northumberland there was a falling off of about one-fifth of a day. There was also a very trifling falling off in South Wales and Monmouth.

The highest average during the month (5.74 days) was worked in the Lothians. Over 5½ days were also worked in West Scotland (5.67 days), North Wales (5.63 days), South Wales and Monmouth (5.58 days) and Cumberland (5.56 days). Only two districts worked an average of less than 5 days, viz., Northumberland (4.75 days) and Nottingham and Leicester (4.57 days).

COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS WORKED BY COLLIERIES IN FEBRUARY 1897 AND 1896, AND IN JANUARY 1897.

District.	No. employed in Feb. 1897 at the Collieries included in the Table.	Average No. of Days worked per Week by the Collieries in four weeks ended			Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Feb. 1897 as compared with	
		20th Feb. 1897.	22nd Feb. 1896.	23rd Jan. 1897.	A year ago.	A m/nth ago.
ENGLAND & WALES						
Northumberland ...	31,440	4.75	4.30	4.96	+ .45	- .21
Durham ...	84,716	5.47	5.46	5.22	+ .01	+ .25
Cumberland ...	6,221	5.56	4.65	5.25	+ .91	+ .31
Yorkshire ...	44,697	5.39	4.73	5.19	+ .66	+ .20
Lancashire and Cheshire	43,989	5.41	5.01	5.06	+ .40	+ .35
Nottingham and Leicester	22,202	4.57	3.91	4.41	+ .66	+ .16
Derbyshire ...	31,308	5.14	4.49	5.04	+ .65	+ .10
Staffordshire ...	23,480	5.44	4.84	5.22	+ .60	+ .22
Salop, Worcester and Warwick	7,098	5.42	4.67	5.24	+ .75	+ .18
Gloucester and Somerset	8,206	5.30	4.80	5.17	+ .50	+ .13
North Wales ...	10,989	5.63	4.85	5.30	+ .78	+ .33
South Wales & Monmouth	64,615	5.58	5.49	5.59	+ .09	- .01
SCOTLAND.						
West Scotland ...	19,952	5.67	5.13	4.91	+ .54	+ .76
The Lothians ...	2,945	5.74	5.34	4.92	+ .40	+ .82
Fife ...	11,790	5.06	4.21	4.85	+ .85	+ .22
IRELAND						
...	593	5.05	4.58	5.04	+ .47	+ .01
Grand Total & Averages	414,241	5.34	4.91	5.15	+ .43	+ .19

The percentage of unemployed miners in trade unions in Northumberland and Durham amounted to 1.6 per cent. at the end of February as compared with 1.4 per cent. at the end of January, and 2.0 per cent. at the end of February 1896.

Exports of Coal.—During February 2,340,257 tons of coal, coke, cinders and patent fuel were exported, as compared with 2,763,954 tons in January, and 2,308,521 tons in February 1896.

(b) IRON MINING INDUSTRY IN FEBRUARY.

EMPLOYMENT in this industry again improved during February. The average number of days worked fell short of full time by about one-seventh of a day only, and was higher than in January and in the corresponding period of last year. The number of persons employed has also increased during the twelve months by 4.3 per cent.

During the four weeks ended February 20th, the 16,624 workpeople employed at 125 mines and open works included in the returns, worked an average of 5.86 days per week, as compared with an average of 5.72 days in January, and 5.85 days in February 1896. The number employed at the mines and open works was greater by 682 at the end of the period dealt with than at the corresponding period of 1896. Of these workpeople 67.5 per cent. worked full time, and 95.7 per cent. five or more days per week, as compared with percentages of 74.6 and 95.4 respectively, in February 1896.

The tables below show for the mines included in the returns received:—

(I.) Average number of days worked per week by the mines —

District.	No. employed in Feb. 1897 at the Mines included in the Table.	Average number of days worked per week by the mines in 4 weeks ended		
		20th Feb. 1897.	22nd Feb. 1896.	23rd Jan. 1897.
ENGLAND—				
Cumberland and Lancashire ...	6,056	5.94	5.90	5.81
Cleveland ...	6,409	5.89	5.95	5.78
Lincolnshire and Leicestershire	641	5.88	5.93	5.92
Northamptonshire...	630	5.53	5.93	5.47
Staffordshire and Shropshire ...	1,274	5.37	5.20	5.50
Other places in England ...	341	5.64	5.76	5.65
SCOTLAND ...	978	5.94	6.00	5.02
IRELAND ...	295	6.00	6.00	5.96
Total ...	16,624	5.86	5.85	5.72

(II.) Classification of workpeople by days worked in four weeks by the mines:—

Number of days on which Iron Ore or Stone was got and drawn in four weeks.	February 1897.		Corresponding percentages in—	
	No. of Workpeople employed.	Percentage proportion to total.	February 1896.	January 1897.
22 days (full time) ...	11,216	67.5	74.6*	33.3
22 and under 22 days ...	4,259	25.6	17.4*	53.2
Under 20 days ...	441	2.6	8.4*	7.6
	708	4.3	4.6*	5.9
Total ...	16,624	100.0	100.0	100.0

(c) PIG IRON INDUSTRY IN FEBRUARY.

EMPLOYMENT at the end of February still continued better than at the corresponding period of 1896.

The 108 ironmasters, from whom returns have been received, and who own 93 per cent. of all the furnaces in blast in the United Kingdom, had 351 furnaces in blast at the end of February, or six more in England and Wales and two more in Scotland than a year ago. The number employed at these furnaces was 22,247, or 441 more than a year ago. In England and Wales the numbers increased by 376, notwithstanding a falling off of 225 in the Cleveland district. In Scotland the increase amounted to 65.

During the month four furnaces were re-lit in England and Wales and one in Scotland, whilst two in England and one in Scotland were blown out. In spite of this net increase of two in the number of furnaces in blast, the number employed at the end of the month was less by 69 than at the end of the previous month, a trifling increase in England and Wales being outweighed by a decrease in Scotland.

The subjoined table gives:— Comparison of the number of furnaces in blast at end of February 1897 with the number in blast at end of February 1896, and at end of January 1897, so far as included in the returns made to the Department by 108 ironmasters owning 93 per cent. of all the furnaces in blast in the United Kingdom:—

Districts.	Present time compared with a year ago.			Present time compared with a month ago.		
	Feb. 1897.	Feb. 1896.	Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Feb. 1897.	Feb. 1897.	Jan. 1897.	Increase (+) or Decrease (-) in Feb. 1897.
ENGLAND & WALES—						
Cleveland ...	93	96	- 3	93	93	...
Cumberland & Lancs. S. and S.W. Yorks...	45	45	...	45	44	+ 1
Lincolnshire ...	15	15	...	15	16	- 1
Midlands ...	15	14	+ 1	15	14	+ 1
Glamorgan and Mon.	92	85	+ 7	92	92	...
Other districts ...	7	10	- 3	7	7	...
Total England and Wales...	287	281	+ 6	287	285	+ 2
SCOTLAND ...	64	62	+ 2	64	64	...
Total furnaces included in returns ...	351	343	+ 8	351	349	+ 2

The shipments of pig iron to foreign countries and British Possessions from all ports of the United Kingdom during February amounted to 55,496 tons, as compared with 52,669 tons in February 1896, and 25,385 tons in February 1895.

* Amended figures.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—SPECIAL INDUSTRIES (continued).

(d) EMPLOYMENT AT STEEL AND TINPLATE WORKS, PUDDLING FURNACES AND ROLLING MILLS IN FEBRUARY.

EMPLOYMENT in these industries again improved during February. There was a further increase in the number employed in the Steel trade and Tinplate trade, while in the Iron trade the numbers remained practically the same. As compared with a year ago, every section shows an increase in the numbers employed.

The total number of workpeople employed at all the works covered by the returns was 81,003 at the end of February as compared with 79,964 at the end of January and 77,246 at the end of February 1896. The increase during the twelve months amounts to 4.9 per cent.

Of the 81,003 persons, 37,079 were employed at 128 Steelworks, or 390 more than at the end of the previous month, and 2,894 or 8.5 per cent. more than a year ago.

The number employed at 94 Iron Puddling Furnaces and Rolling Mills was 18,278, or 9 less than at the end of February, and 68 more than a year ago.

Table showing the number of persons employed* in the under-mentioned occupations at the end of February 1897 and 1896 and January 1897 respectively, by 241 employers making returns:—

Occupation.	Number Employed.		
	Feb. 1897.	Feb. 1896.	Jan. 1897.
Steel Making, Casting, Melting, Rolling and Forging.			
England and Wales ...	31,209	29,255	30,883
Scotland ...	5,870	4,930	5,806
Total ...	37,079	34,185	36,689
Iron Puddling and Rolling.			
England and Wales ...	14,384	14,106	14,437
Scotland ...	3,894	4,104	3,850
Total ...	18,278	18,210	18,287
Tinplate Manufacture.			
England and Wales ...	12,002	11,898	11,900
Other Workpeople who cannot be separately classified as above.*			
England and Wales ...	12,394	11,788	11,848
Scotland ...	1,250	1,168	1,240
Total ...	13,644	12,956	13,088
Grand Total ...	81,003	77,246	79,964

Returns have been received respecting 87 Tinplate Works in South Wales, Monmouthshire, and Gloucestershire. There has been a further increase in the number of mills at work. At the end of February 54 of the works, with 290 mills, were giving full employment, and 12 works, with 61 mills, partial employment, 44 of the mills being at work. The remaining 21 works, with 132 mills, were idle. Thus a total of 334 were working, as compared with 332 at the end of January.

Table showing number of tinplate works and mills in South Wales Monmouth and Gloucestershire fully or partially employed, or wholly idle, at the end of February, so far as stated in the returns received by the Department:—

	No. of Works.	No. of Mills in such Works.		
		Working.	Not Working.	Total.
Works giving full employment ...	54	290	—	290
Works giving partial employment ...	12	44	17	61
Works idle ...	21	—	132	132
Total for February...	87	334	149	483
<i>Corresponding Total for January†</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>332</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>483</i>

Returns received from the owners of 51 tinplate works show that they had 12,002 persons employed at the end of the month, or 102 more than at the end of January, and 107 more than a year ago.

* The table does not include workpeople engaged in machining or other engineering or constructive processes.
† Amended figures.

The exports of tinplates and sheets from the United Kingdom during February amounted to 25,335 tons, as compared with 24,496 tons during January and 18,454 tons during February 1896. Of these quantities the United States took 9,678 tons in February, 8,810 tons in January, and 6,980 tons in February 1896.

(e.)—AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN FEBRUARY.

THE agricultural correspondent to the Department, on the basis of 180 returns from various parts of the country reports as follows:—Generally speaking the state of agricultural employment was favourable during the month of February, though there was some slight irregularity in the earlier part owing to the state of the weather. In a number of districts farm work was in a backward state on account of the unfavourable weather in the preceding months, and in consequence there was a demand for labour.

Changes in the rates of weekly cash wages amounting to a rise of 1s. a week took place in Norfolk in certain districts in the Unions of Docking and Freebridge Lynn; in Northamptonshire in the Peterborough Union; in Kent in the Bridge Union; and in Suffolk in the Samford Union.

Northern Counties.—Reports from Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Durham, and Yorkshire, state that employment throughout the month of February was generally regular.

Midland Counties.—In Cheshire favourable reports come from the Unions of Nantwich and Tarvin. In Shropshire employment is said to have been regular in the Oswestry Union; but in the Market Drayton Union, some oddmen were in irregular work, though fewer in number than in the month of January. Favourable reports come from the Belper and Chesterfield Unions of Derbyshire, and from the Derbyshire portion of the Burton-on-Trent Union. In Nottinghamshire work was generally satisfactory in the Newark and Workop Unions, but an unfavourable report comes from the Southwell Union. In Staffordshire in the Lichfield and Tamworth Unions, the state of employment is stated to be satisfactory, except in the case of a comparatively few men at the earlier part of the month. In Warwickshire work is said to be generally regular in the Unions of Alcester, Atherstone, Coventry, Foleshill, Meriden, Stratford-on-Avon, and Warwick; in Leicestershire, in the Unions of Barrow-on-Soar, Lutterworth, and Melton Mowbray; and in Rutland in the Oakham Union. Reports from Oxfordshire state that work was regular in the Union of Banbury, but that in the Headington Union, and also in the Thame Union, there was still some irregularity, though not of the same extent as in January.

In Huntingdonshire reports of a favourable character come from the Unions of Huntingdon, St. Ives, and part of the St. Neots Union. In certain other parishes of the St. Neots Union (Beds and Hunts), some irregularity of work is reported, owing to wet weather. Reports from Northamptonshire state that, with few exceptions, employment was generally regular in the Unions of Brixworth, Brackley, Hardingstone, Kettering, Peterborough and Potterspury. In Bedfordshire a favourable report comes from the Bedford Union.

Eastern Counties.—In Essex there was some slight irregularity of employment, particularly in the earlier part of the month, owing to wet weather, in the Unions of Braintree, Colchester, Dunmow, and Orsett, but in the Unions of Billericay, and Tendring work was said to have been regular throughout the month. Reports from Suffolk state that work has been generally regular with but few exceptions in the Unions of Bosmere and Claydon, Mildenhall, and Mutford and Lothingland. In the Unions of Hartismere and Plomesgate there was some irregularity at the beginning of the month due to bad weather; subsequently the state of employment was satisfactory. In the Unions of Cosford and Thingoe there was some irregularity throughout the month, chiefly owing to unfavourable weather. In Norfolk, though in some cases there was some irregularity in the earlier part of the month, the state of employment was generally of a satisfactory nature in the Unions of Aylsham, Blofield, Depwade, Downham, Docking, Erpingham, East and West Flegg, Forehoe, Freebridge Lynn, Gaultcross, Henstead, Lodden and Clavering, Mitford and Launditch, St. Faith's, Smallburgh, Swaffham, Thetford, Walsingham, and Wayland. Reports from Cambridgeshire state that work was generally regular in the Unions of North Witchford, Royston, and Wisbech, but in certain parts of the Chesterton Union there was some irregularity during the earlier part of the month. In Lincolnshire reports of a favourable character, with but few exceptions, come from the Unions of Boston,

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—SPECIAL INDUSTRIES (continued).

Brigg, Grantham, Grimsby, Louth, Lincoln, Spilsby, Sleaford, and Stamford.

Home Counties.—In *Berkshire* work is said to be generally regular in the Unions of Abingdon and Wallingford. In the Wantage Union, where the state of employment has been unsatisfactory for several months, a considerable improvement took place in the month of February. In *Buckinghamshire* favourable reports come from the Unions of Aylesbury, Newport Pagnell, and Winslow; in *Hertfordshire*, in the Unions of Buntingford, Hatfield, Hertford, and Hitchin; but a report from the Hemel Hempstead Union refers to some irregularity of employment. In *Surry*, work is said to be generally regular in the Unions of Farnham, and Godstone; in *Kent*, in the Unions of Bridge, Hoo, Faversham, Hollingbourne, and Milton.

Southern and South-Western Counties.—Reports from *Sussex* state that work was regular with but few exceptions in the Unions of Horsham and Rye; in *Hampshire*, in the Unions of Hartley Wintney, Kingsclere, and Stockbridge. In *Dorsetshire*, in the Unions of Blandford, and Bridport, work was generally regular, but in certain parishes in the Cranborne, Dorchester, and Wimborne Unions some irregularity existed. Reports of a favourable character come from *Wiltshire* from the Unions of Devizes, Pewsey, Wilton, and Westbury and Whorwellsdown; from *Gloucestershire* from the Unions of Gloucester, and Westbury-on-Trym, but in certain parishes in the Cirencester Union a few young men are said to have been in irregular work. Also in the Bromyard, and Ledbury Unions of *Herefordshire* there was some slight irregularity of employment in certain parishes. Reports of a favourable character come from *Somersetshire* from the Unions of Langport, Taunton, Wells, and Wellington; from *Devonshire* from the Unions of Barnstaple, and Tavistock; and from *Cornwall* from the Bodmin Union.

(f) EMPLOYMENT OF SEAMEN IN FEBRUARY.

(Data supplied by the Marine Department of the Board of Trade.)

The number of men shipped as the crews of foreign-going vessels from certain selected ports (at which over 80 per cent. of the total tonnage of vessels in the foreign trade is entered and cleared) was 28,413, being 38 less than in February 1896. The supply of seamen and firemen during February was reported as equal to or greater than the demand at nearly all the ports. At Dublin there was a scarcity of seamen for sailing vessels.

Particulars of the changes which have taken place during the month in the rates of wages at Glasgow and North Shields will be found on page 90.

Table showing the number* of men, &c., shipped as the crews of foreign-going vessels at some of the principal ports of the United Kingdom in February 1897 and 1896 respectively, together with the number* shipped in the two months ended February in each of these years:—

Principal Ports.	Number of Men, &c., shipped in February 1897.			Total in Feb. 1896.	Total number Shipped in two months ended February,	
	In Sailing Vessels.	In Steam Vessels.	Total in Feb. 1897.		1897.	1896.
ENGLAND.						
East Coast.						
Tyne Ports ...	49	2,957	3,006	2,447	6,632	5,699
Sunderland ...	25	397	422	464	1,177	1,184
Middlesbrough ...	8	303	311	352	7,026	7,026
Hull ...	53	802	855	670	2,060	2,096
Grimsby ...	8	26	34	13	111	166
Bristol Channel.						
Bristol ...	—	224	224	272	446	560
Newport, Mon. ...	19	960	979	1,171	2,488	2,481
Cardiff ...	35	4,767	5,092	4,881	11,865	11,039
Swansea ...	88	342	430	563	1,413	1,400
Other Ports.						
Liverpool ...	179	7,775	7,954	8,581	17,082	17,667
London ...	407	4,876	5,283	5,349	11,2	11,034
Southampton ...	—	1,089	1,089	1,077	2,332	2,381
SCOTLAND.						
Leith, Kirkcaldy, Methil and Grangemouth ...	16	316	332	467	1,173	1,144
Glasgow ...	100	1,993	2,093	2,025	4,216	3,993
IRELAND.						
Dublin ...	—	63	63	42	197	74
Belfast ...	—	246	246	137	488	401
Total Feb. 1897 ...	1,277	27,136	28,413	...	63,812	...
Ditto, Feb. 1896 ...	1,624	26,827	...	28,451	...	62,345

* It will be understood that the numbers given are the numbers of separate engagements, not of separate individual † Including Barry and Penarth

(g) LONDON DOCK AND WHARF LABOUR IN FEBRUARY.

EMPLOYMENT both at the docks and at the wharves was better during February than during the corresponding period of last year, but not so good as during January.

The average daily number of labourers employed at all the docks, and at 113 of the principal wharves, during the four weeks ended February 27th was 14,762, as compared with 16,008 in the five preceding weeks, and 13,236 a year ago. The estimated number at work on any one day varied from 13,280 on the 20th to 16,506 on the 1st. The weekly average number employed decreased week by week throughout the month.

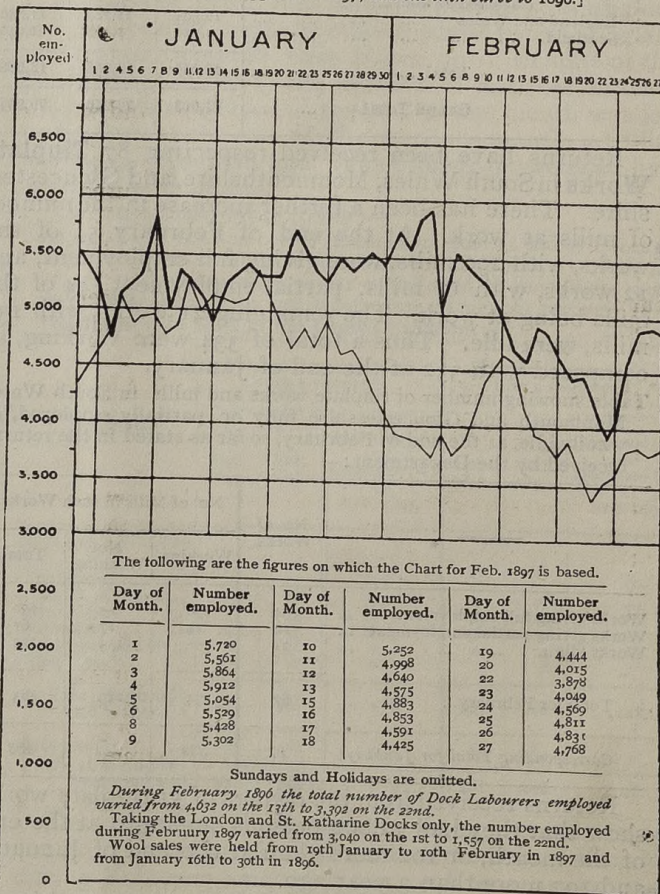
Detailed Figures.—(1) The following table shows the estimated daily average number of dock and wharf labourers employed in each week of the month:—

Period.	Labourers employed in Docks.			Labourers employed at 113 Wharves making Returns.	Total Dock and Wharf Labourers included in Returns.
	By Dock Companies or through Contractors	By Ship-owners, &c.	Total.		
1st week of February	7,747	2,280	10,027	5,664	15,691
2nd " " "	6,939	2,232	9,171	5,577	14,748
3rd " " "	6,387	2,303	8,690	5,711	14,401
4th " " "	6,159	2,402	8,561	5,646	14,207
Average for 4 weeks ending Feb. 27, 1897	6,808	2,304	9,112	5,650	14,762
Average for February 1896	5,893	1,770	7,663	5,573	13,236
Average for January 1897	7,705	2,584	10,289	5,719	16,008

(2) The daily fluctuation in the number of dock labourers employed by the London and India Docks Joint Committee during January and February is shown on the chart below. The numbers in February ranged from 3,878 on the 22nd to 5,912 on the 4th.

Chart showing the total number of Dock Labourers* employed by the Joint Committee at the London, St. Katharine, East and West India, Victoria and Albert Docks, and the Town Warehouses, for each day during the months of January 1897 and February 1897. The corresponding curve for January and February 1896 is also given for comparison.

[The thick curve applies to 1897, and the thin curve to 1896.]



* Dock Labourers employed by Shipowners direct, Stevedores, and Coal Porters are not included.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—SPECIAL INDUSTRIES (continued).

Work in mid-stream has continued good and steady; lightermen, stevedores, coal porters and winchmen have been fairly busy, deal porters have been slack, corn porters have been fairly employed at the lower docks, but only moderately employed at the Surrey and Millwall Docks.

The fruit porters in Thames Street have had steady and good employment, an average number of 433 having been employed, as compared with 380 during January.

(h) EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE TEXTILE TRADES IN FEBRUARY.

ACCORDING to returns from women correspondents, employment for women in the cotton trade during February was worse than in January. In the woollen and worsted trade there was only a very slight improvement. Information has been received with regard to the employment of women and girls in 490 cotton, woollen, worsted and silk mills, which is summarised as follows:—

State of Employment.	February 1897.			Corresponding Percentages in—	
	Number of Mills.	Approximate No. of Women and Girls employed.	Per-centage.	Jan. 1897.	Feb. 1896.
Full time ...	356	52,280	67	76	88
Part time, but partial employment ...	75	16,080	21	12	8
Short time ...	48	8,650	11	12	2
Closed for repairs, bad trade, disputes, or other causes ...	11	1,080	1	...	2
Total ...	490	78,090	100	100	100

Cotton Trade.—The number of women and girls usually employed in the cotton mills reported on is 60,040. Of these, 69 per cent. were employed in mills working full time (to be compared with 78 per cent. among those for whom returns were received in January, and with 87 per cent. in February 1896); 22 per cent. in mills running full time but giving only partial employment; 8 per cent. in mills running short time, while mills employing 1 per cent. were stopped during the whole or part of the month.

Woollen and Worsted Trade.—The number of women and girls usually employed in the woollen and worsted mills reported on is 16,540. Of these, 65 per cent. were employed in mills working full time (compared with 64 per cent. among those for whom returns were received in January, and 93 per cent. in February 1896); 14 per cent. in mills running full time but giving only partial employment; 20 per cent. in mills running short time, while mills employing 1 per cent. were closed during the whole or part of the month.

DISTRICT REPORTS FROM LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.

LONDON.

Employment in Various Industries.—Almost without exception the returns received from the various trade unions show an improvement, both when compared with last month and with February 1896. Returns from 399 branches of 105 unions, with an aggregate membership of 71,093, show that 1,949 (or 2.7 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 3.3 in January and 3.1 per cent. in February of last year.

The **Engineering, Metal and Shipbuilding** trades, particularly the latter, have continued to improve. Reports from 115 branches of 24 unions, with a membership of 22,034, show that 412 (or 1.9 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 2.1 in January and 2.9 per cent. in February 1896.

Except with the painters and decorators, employment in the **Building** trades is brisk. Reports from 179 branches of 7 unions paying unemployed benefit, and having a membership of 11,037, show that 169 (or 1.5 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 1.8 last month and 2.1 per cent. in February 1896. The bricklayers and mill-sawyers describe

employment as good; the carpenters and joiners, plasterers, stone-masons, and stonemasons, as fair; the plumbers as moderate; and the painters and decorators as still dull.

Employment in the **Furnishing** trades has further improved. Reports from 35 branches of 9 unions, with a membership of 5,389, show that 224 (or 4.2 per cent.) were unemployed, as against 5.5 in January, and 1.7 per cent. in February 1896.

The **Coopers** are still busy. Two societies, with a membership of 960, return only 4 (or 0.4 per cent.) unemployed. In January there were none unemployed, and in February 1896 less than 1 per cent.

The **Coachbuilding** trades are still actively employed. Returns from 11 branches of 8 unions, with a membership of 1,233, show that 24 (or 1.9 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 3.0 per cent. in January, and 2.5 in February 1896.

The **Printing and Bookbinding** trades are better employed in most branches. Reports from 21 unions, with a membership of 21,339, show that 776 (or 3.6 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 4.3 in January, and 4.4 per cent. in February of last year.

Clothing Trades.—Employment in the wholesale clothing trade, and in the East End bespoke trade improved towards the close of the month; the West End bespoke trade was dull at the commencement, but improved at the end of the month. The mantle trade has been bad, but is now somewhat better. The hat trade is reported to be steadily improving; the cap trade quiet; the helmet trade good. The fur skin dressers remain fairly busy; the furriers are slack, but are better employed than at the corresponding period of last year.

Boot and Shoe Trades.—Employment in the machine branch has continued to improve, and is now fairly good; the high-class bespoke branch has slightly improved; the slipper-makers continue slack.

Employment in the **Leather** trades has again improved. Returns from 6 societies, with a membership of 1,609, show that only 19 (or 1.2 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of the month, compared with 2.1 in January and 1.7 per cent. in February 1896.

Glass and Pottery Trades.—Employment in these trades remains stationary. Returns from 7 unions, with a membership of 1,466, show that 99 (or 6.8 per cent.) were unemployed, as in January. The percentage for February 1896 was 5.7.

Workers in Fibre, Hair, &c.—Employment in these trades has considerably improved. Returns from 6 societies, with a membership of 946, show that 34 (or 3.6 per cent.) were unemployed at the end of February, compared with 5.2 per cent. last month and 3.2 per cent. in February 1896.

The **Gold and Silver** trades remain steadily employed. Reports from 6 societies, with a membership of 1,098, show that 19 (or 1.7 per cent.) were unemployed, compared with 1.6 in January and 1.0 per cent. in February of last year.

Employment in the **Tobacco** trades has slightly improved. Reports from 3 societies with a membership of 2,136, show that 75 (or 3.5 per cent.) were unemployed, compared with 3.7 in January and 5.6 per cent. in February 1896.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—At the docks and wharves employment was better than a year ago, but not so good as in January. During the four weeks ended February 27th, an average daily number of 14,762 was employed at all the docks and the principal wharves, compared with 16,008 in January, and 13,236 a year ago. Stevedores and lightermen and coal porters and winchmen have been fairly busy, deal porters slack, corn porters fairly employed at the lower docks, but only moderately at the Millwall and Surrey Docks. Fruit porters as well as workers in mid-stream have had good and steady employment. (For further details, see p. 78.)

Labour Bureaux.—The seven London Bureaux which furnished returns for February both in 1897 and in 1896, registered 994 fresh applications for work during the month, being 1,231 less than in the previous February. Work was found during the month through these bureaux for 878 persons (333 being engaged by private employers and 545 by local authorities) as compared with 2,034 persons (1,424 by private employers and 610 by local authorities) during February 1896.

Pauperism.—The number of persons relieved on the last day of the second week of February was 108,000. This is an increase of 2,706 on the number relieved on the corresponding day of January. As compared with February 1896, there was a decrease in all the Metropolitan districts, except the Western, which showed a slight increase. The total decrease amounted to 289.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (continued).—LONDON AND NORTHERN COUNTIES.

The number of vagrants in London on one day in the second week in February was 1,155, as compared with 1,183 in February 1896.

In West Ham the number of paupers on one day in the second week was 8,643 in February, 8,635 in January, and 9,311 in February 1896.

ENGLAND: NORTHERN COUNTIES.

Tyne and Wear District.

Coal Mining.—Northumberland.—Steam coal pits have not worked so well, the average number of days worked per week being 4.56, as against 4.88 days in January. House coal collieries have averaged 5.33 days, as against 5.26 days in the previous month. Of the 19,894 union miners 67 (or 0.33 per cent.) are idle, as against 137, or 0.71 per cent., in January. Durham.—Gas coal pits are steadily employed, having worked an average of 5.54 days per week, as compared with 5.02 in the previous month. Pits producing coking coal have averaged 5.59 days per week, as against 5.31 in January. A few steam and house coal collieries have lost several days. Pits producing a mixed class of coal are working fairly well. Returns from 94 pits, employing 46,855 men and boys, show an average of 5.44 days worked per week. The number of unemployed union miners is 706, or 1.21 per cent., as against 759, or 1.28 per cent. in January.

Metal Mining.—Upper Weardale lead miners are reported as not being fully employed. Iron mines have worked fairly well.

Quarrying.—Limestone quarries in Stanhope and district have been partially or wholly idle, owing to bad weather. Whinstone quarries are well employed. Work at the Gateshead quarries continues bad.

Engineering and Shipbuilding.—On the Tyne.—Of the 11,164 union members of these trades, 404 (or 3.6 per cent.) are unemployed, as against 415 (or 3.8 per cent.) in January. Drillers and hole cutters on the Tyne and at Blyth are fully employed. Employment is good in marine engineering shops, and also at the Elswick factory and in the shipyards. Employment on repairers' work and with platers has been affected by dispute. On the Wear.—Branches of these trades, with 4,298 members, have 207 (or 4.8 per cent.) out of employment, as against 389 (or 9.1 per cent.) in January. Employment in engine shops continues good. Iron shipbuilders are fairly well employed. The shipsmiths are affected by a dispute. The sailmakers report about 5 per cent. idle. Employment continues brisk in the smelting shops and at the plate mills. Three mills were idle for one week at Consett, owing to the railway dispute, otherwise mills have worked 4 and 5 shifts per week.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—At Pelaw and Heworth trimmers and teamers are busy. At Tyne docks, at Sunderland, and at the quays, employment has been affected by the railway dispute. Coal porters and shippers report work as bad. The Tyne watermen have been well employed. The demand for sailors and firemen has slightly fallen off.

Building Trades.—On the Wear employment is slack. On the Tyne it is better. Employment with carpenters and joiners is unchanged; of 3,324 members, 70 (or 2.2 per cent.) are unemployed. The plumbers (house and ship) on both rivers have 3.3 per cent. idle.

Woodworking Trades.—Coopers on the Tyne report an improvement. Millsawyers and wood cutters on both rivers have less than 1 per cent. idle. Lath-renders report employment as fairly good.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress printers on the Tyne are moderately employed throughout the district. Bookbinders and machine rulers on both rivers are busy. Five paper mills on the Tyne continue working a little over half time, three others have worked full time, while one has been idle a week.

Glass and Chemical Trades.—Pressed glass makers are fairly well employed. Bottle-makers on the Wear, at Seaham Harbour and at Blaydon are well employed. White lead works continue busy. One chemical factory has re-started. The cement industry is reported as not so good.

Fishing.—Trawl fishing has been fairly good. The line boats, however, have been stopped during the latter part of the month by stormy weather.—*J. Ratcliffe.*

Middlesbrough, Stockton, and District.

Iron Mining.—Employment is reported as continuing good with the Cleveland miners.

Iron and Steel Trades.—Finished ironworkers generally are reported as well employed. Steelworkers, with one or two exceptions, are reported as busy; at one large works in Middlesbrough the men are only working 4 shifts in the week; at Eston employment is somewhat unsettled; at Hartlepool the blastfurnaces and rolling mills

are busy. Employment at the foundries and bridge works continues fair.

Engineering.—Apart from the disputes in connection with shipyard engineers, employment is good throughout the district, particularly at Hartlepool. Branches with 3,236 members report 29 (or 0.9 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 20 (or 0.6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Shipbuilding.—Employment is reported as good in two yards, fair in three, moderate in two, slack in one, and nearly stopped in the ninth. The shipwrights report employment as fair.

Building Trades.—All branches report employment as fair for the season. Branches of joiners (house and ship) and sawyers and machinists, with 1,185 members, report 43 (or 3.6 per cent.) as unemployed, against 22 (or 1.9 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—Employment in both sections is very quiet at the Hartlepoons. At Middlesbrough, sailors and firemen are moderately employed; dock and riverside labourers are busy.

A. Main.

Cumberland and Barrow District.

The following is a summary of the returns received as to the state of employment in the above district:—

Iron and Steel Trades.—The number of furnaces in blast in Cumberland and North Lancashire at the end of February was 45, one furnace having been re-lit during the month. The number of workpeople employed was 3,341, or 16 more than at the end of January. As compared with February 1896 the number of furnaces in blast is the same, but the number of workpeople employed has increased by 99.

Coal Mining.—Employment in this industry in Cumberland was better in February than during the previous month, or the corresponding month of last year. The number of days worked per week during February was 5.56, as compared with 5.25 in January, and 4.65 in February 1896. The number of workpeople employed at the pits included in the returns was 6,221, or 3.1 per cent. more than last year. In Cumberland 2,250 miners have obtained an advance in wages of 5 per cent.

Iron Mining.—Practically full-time has been worked during February at the 43 iron mines in Cumberland and North Lancashire from which returns have been received. The average number of days worked per week at these mines, which employed 6,056 workpeople, was 5.94, as against 5.81 days in January and 5.90 days in February 1896. The number of workpeople employed was greater by 149, or 2.5 per cent., than in February 1896.

LANCASHIRE AND NEIGHBOURING DISTRICTS.

Oldham and District.

Cotton Trade.—Employment for cotton spinners shows no improvement, and in the Ashton district is reported as slack, with much short time. In Oldham and the surrounding districts, as well as in Rochdale, Mossley, Stalybridge, and Stockport, employment is reported as moderate. Out of 9,149 union members, 308 (or 3.4 per cent.) are on unemployed benefit, as against 279 (or 3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The Oldham cardroom operatives report employment as moderate, and with 10,997 members, have 167 (or 1.5 per cent.) on unemployed benefit, as against 254 (or 2.3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. Mossley cardroom workers, with 900 members, have 70 on unemployed benefit. Powerloom overlookers have 4 per cent. on unemployed benefit. The weavers report employment as slack on velvets, indifferent on calicoes, and as moderate in winding, reeling, and sectional warping. Ring spinners continue well employed; twiners are moderately so.

Woolen Trade.—A slight improvement is reported in employment in the Rochdale, Milnrow, and Stockport districts.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Engineers, with 2,358 members, report employment as moderate, with 45 (or 1.9 per cent.) on unemployed benefit. Pattern-makers, tinplate-workers, brass-founders, meter-makers, and ironfounders report employment as moderate; machine moulders, as good; spindle and flyer makers iron-grinders, boiler-makers and machine workers as fair.

Building Trades.—Carpenters and joiners, plumbers, and bricklayers report employment as moderate; plasterers as fair; and painters as slack.

Coal Mining.—Miners in Royton, Chadderton, and Ashton are working 6 days, and in Oldham 5 days per week.—*T. Ashton.*

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (continued).—LANCASHIRE.

Bolton and District.

Cotton Trade.—Spinning.—Employment in Bolton shows no improvement upon January, but rather tends to decline. One mill is entirely closed. At Chorley employment is reported as fairly good, with all mills working full time. At Bury spinners are fairly well employed. Cardroom operatives are reported as moderately busy, with few unemployed in Bolton; fairly busy at Bury, and busy at Chorley. Weaving.—Employment is still somewhat depressed in Bolton and district. At Chorley hundreds of looms are stopped. At Bury there is still much waiting for warps.

Engineering and Iron Trades.—The engineers are still exceptionally well employed. Branches with 1,818 members report 11 on unemployed benefit, as against 9 at the end of January. The steam engine makers also report employment as good. Ironfounders are reported as slack at one large firm, fairly busy at others. Iron machine makers are still busy in most departments. At Wigan engineers, cycle-makers, steelsmelting and steel roller makers are busy, other branches of the iron trade being only moderately employed. At Chorley and Bury engineers and ironworkers generally are reported as well employed.

Coal Mining.—Employment in Bolton, Walkden, Little Lever, Darcy Lever, Little Hulton and Radcliffe, continues fairly good, the majority of the collieries working six days per week. In the Wigan district colliers are better employed in most mines.

Building Trades.—In Bolton plumbers, joiners, flaggers, paviors and bricklayers are moderately busy; painters, plasterers, slaters, stonedressers and outdoor labourers are not so well employed. In Wigan employment is moderate; at Chorley very slack; at Bury only moderate.—*R. Tootill.*

Blackburn, Burnley, and District.

Cotton Trade.—Weaving.—Employment shows a marked improvement, although in many of the weaving centres short time is still being worked, either through reduction of working hours or through looms waiting for warps. In Burnley the number of looms stopped for various causes is 4,774, and the number working short time is 7,426, as compared with 20,000 on short time at the end of January, in Nelson 3,000 looms are on short time, but the stoppage for beams is considerably less than at the end of January. In Darwen the number of looms totally stopped is 248; on short time 1,510; whilst about 830 are standing for warps. In Colne three firms are still on short time, but at Blackburn, Preston and Padigham, a gradual improvement in employment is shown. Employment in the hardware trade is fair. In the coloured goods trade it is slightly better; loomers and drawers are slack; branches with 900 members have 25 per cent. on short time. Spinning.—Employment is fair in Preston and Accrington moderate in Blackburn, Darwen and Burnley. Cardroom workers in the various districts continue to be well employed. Branches of twisters, warp dressers, and spinners with 3,989 members return 156 (or 3.9 per cent.) as idle, as against 169 (or 4.2 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Building Trades.—Masons, wallers, and labourers are only moderately employed, owing to the weather. Plumbers and painters report employment as improved; carpenters and joiners as fair, branches with 431 members having only 5 unemployed.

Engineering and Iron Trades.—Employment in these trades continues moderately good, especially in the machine fitting and erecting departments.

Mining and Quarrying.—Employment at coal mines in the Burnley district is reported as brisk, full time being worked, except at two pits; in Townley as only moderate, the men working on an average four days per week; in Accrington there is no change. Quarrymen are slack.

Miscellaneous.—Calico-printers and dyers are not quite so well employed; letterpress printers are fully employed. Tailors report no improvement.—*W. H. Wilkinson.*

Manchester and District.

General.—Branches with 22,815 members return 650 (or 2.8 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 611 (or 2.7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—The engineers throughout the district report employment as moderate, with fewer unemployed; the steam engine-makers, machine-workers, ironfounders and brass-founders and finishers as good; boiler-makers in Manchester as good, and at Northwich as slack; braziers and sheet metal workers as moderate. At Warrington wire drawers, wire weavers and tinplate workers are fully employed, filesmiths moderately so.

Branches with 11,098 members return 243 (or 2.2 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 237 (or 2.1 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Textile Trades.—Employment in cotton spinning is reported as moderate, but all the mills are running full time. Employment in the silk trade continues bad with both hand-loom and power-loom weavers. Silk dressers are slack, but silk dyeing shows a slight improvement; fustian cutters are slack; dressers, dyers and finishers report employment as good. About 100 men and youths are unemployed, owing to the removal of a large firm to another district.

Clothing Trades.—Employment with bespoke tailors is described as moderate in Manchester and Stockport, and slack in Macclesfield; in the wholesale clothing department as fair. Ready-made mantle makers, shirt makers and umbrella makers are busy; cap-makers and waterproof garment makers are slack; boot-makers, felt hat makers and felt hat trimmers report employment as moderate.

Building Trades.—The carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, plasterers and stonemasons report employment as moderate; the bricklayers' labourers as good; the plumbers and painters as bad. Branches with 4,536 members return 75 (or 1.7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 49 (or 1.1 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress printing in Manchester is again described as bad; in Stockport, Warrington and Macclesfield as moderate. Bookbinders, pattern card-makers and lithographic printers report employment as moderate throughout.

Woodworking and Coachbuilding Trades.—Cabinet-makers report employment as good in Manchester and Warrington; as moderate in Stockport and Macclesfield; the French polishers as moderate, and the upholsterers as bad. Coachmakers in Manchester report employment as good, and in Warrington and Stockport as moderate. Coopers are fully employed. Branches with 1,548 members return 58 (or 3.7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 86 (or 5.5 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

G. D. Kelley.

Liverpool and District.

Engineering and Shipbuilding.—Boiler-makers and iron shipbuilders report employment as fairly good; engineers, pattern-makers, iron and steel dressers as fair; brassfounders, ironfounders and whitesmiths as good; shipwrights, joiners and painters as dull. Branches with 4,032 members return 209 (or 5.2 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 427 (or 10.7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—Cabinet-makers and French polishers report employment as moderate; upholsterers as fair; coachmakers as unchanged; woodworking machinists as good; coopers as dull.

Shipping, Dock and Transport Labour.—Sailors and firemen report employment as still dull; dock labourers as falling off; Mersey flatmen as fair; quay and railway carters as unchanged; coal-heavers as moderate.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress printers report employment as improved; lithographic printers, bookbinders and stereotypers as good. Branches with 1,264 members return 60 (or 4.7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 83 (or 6.6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Clothing Trades.—The bespoke tailors report employment as dull; operatives in the ready-made branch as quiet; boot and shoe makers as moderate.

Building Trades.—Bricklayers, masons and plasterers are fully employed; joiners report employment as improving; plumbers, as moderate; painters, as dull.

Coal Mining and Quarrying.—Coal miners in St. Helens district report that they are working five days per week. In Skelmersdale, they continue fully employed. Quarrymen continue well employed.

Glass and Chemical Trades.—Glass bottle makers continue busy. Employment in chemical trades is moderate.—*C. Rouse.*

A report from Winsford states that employment with salt workers has been generally slack, and more pans have been put out; a few firms, however, are busy. Employment at Middlewich is normal. Chemical workers at Middlewich remain slack. Employment in the building trades is reported as fair in Winsford and Middlewich. The moulders at Winsford are still working short time. Fustian cutters report employment as slack, with several unemployed.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (continued).—YORKSHIRE.

YORKSHIRE.

Hull and District.

Shipbuilding and Engineering.—The shipbuilding yards, engineering works and boiler shops continue busy. The engineers, machine workers, smiths, strikers, pattern-makers, ironfounders, brassfounders, and finishers, iron and steel dressers, boiler-makers, drillers and hole cutters, and shipwrights report employment as good; the general shipyard and engineering labourers, as moderate; the sailmakers, as bad. Employment on repair work is also good. Engineers at Doncaster, Grimsby, and Goole, report employment as good. Shipwrights at Grimsby are reported as slack. Societies with 5,280 members, return 160 (or 3 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 126 (or 2.4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Building Trades.—Employment generally in the building trades, except with the painters, is good in Hull, Grimsby, Goole, Doncaster and Driffield.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—The seamen and firemen report employment as moderate. Dock labourers at Goole report employment as moderate; at Grimsby and Hull, as bad.

Fishing Industry.—The steam trawlers have been making more regular trips and have landed good supplies of fish, giving more employment to workers connected with the fish market; but prices have been lower. The fish curers report employment as bad, the pontoon labourers as moderate; the trawl fishermen as moderate; the trawling engineers and firemen as good.

Seed Crushing, Paint and Colour Works.—Employment in seed crushing mills in Hull was at first fairly good, but during the month has become depressed; some mills have been compelled to stop. The paint and colour works are reported as fairly well employed.

Printing and kindred Trades.—The letterpress and lithographic printers and bookbinders report employment as good in Hull and Doncaster.

Woodworking and Furnishing Trades.—The coach-builders in Hull and Doncaster report employment as good, the cabinet-makers as moderate, the brushmakers at Hull as good. The coopers report employment as good.

Miscellaneous.—Employment with the curriers and leather-dressers at Doncaster is good; with the tailors at Doncaster, bad. W. G. Millington.

Leeds and District.

General.—Branches of societies, with 7,355 members, return 164 (or 2.2 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 213 (or 3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Employment in the engineering trade continues good in Leeds and at Wakefield; ironfounders are busy at Leeds, Stanningley, Bramley and Rodley; boiler-makers in locomotive shops are brisk, in other branches quiet; at Stanningley they are dull but improving. Steelworkers are busy; pattern-makers, machine-workers, and spindle and flyer-makers well employed; smiths and strikers moderately so; stove grate-workers are quiet. Branches with 3,613 members return 36 (or 1 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 51 (or 1.5 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Clothing Trades.—In the boot and shoe industry employment has been only moderate. In the ready made clothing trade it is fairly good, both in factories and workshops; bespoke tailors are slack.

Textile Trades.—Employment in most of the mills in Leeds is only moderate. Blanket-raisers are quiet; linen workers are on short time; flax workers continue busy; willeys and fettlers are slack. At Yeadon and in the Stanningley and Bramley district employment continues slack; at Wakefield fair.

Building Trades.—Employment in Leeds has been good for joiners, bricklayers and masons; slack with plumbers, moderate with painters. At Wakefield and Harrogate employment continues good.

Mining.—The pits in the Leeds district are generally fully employed, some house-coal pits "playing" on Saturdays. At Wakefield employment continues good.

Leather Trades.—Tanners and leather shavers report employment as quiet; curriers as slightly improved.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress printers report employment as fair; lithographers as moderate, bookbinders and machine rulers as busy.

Glass Trades.—Employment in the glass bottle industry at Leeds and Wakefield continues fairly good.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—Brushmaking continues good; coachmaking moderate; cabinet-making good.—O. Connellan.

Bradford and Huddersfield District.

Worsted Trade.—Employment in Bradford and district remains bad. In the Haworth valley a considerable number are working short time; one firm, however, is working overtime in the weaving department. In Halifax employment is slack; in Huddersfield there is a slight improvement.

Woollen Trade.—Employment in and around Huddersfield seems to be a little better than in January, especially in the Colne valley. Employment in the heavy woollen trade is reported as exceptionally bad.

Other Textile Trades.—Employment in the silk trade at Manningham is said to be bad in all departments; in Halifax and Brighouse it remains quiet. Employment in cotton spinning and twining is fairly good.

Metal Trades.—Branches of the engineers and ironfounders at Halifax, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Bradford and Keighley, with 3,110 members, have 153 (or 4.9 per cent.) unemployed, as against 80 (or 2.6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Building Trades.—Employment in Huddersfield is reported as good; in Bradford, Dewsbury, Batley and Halifax as fair.

Miscellaneous.—Employment is reported as quiet in the tailoring and printing trades.—A. Gee.

Sheffield, Barnsley, and Rotherham District.

General.—Branches of societies (exclusive of coal miners) with 13,930 members, have 94 (or 0.7 per cent. unemployed), as against 114 (or 0.8 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Iron and Steel Industries.—Blast furnacemen, puddlers, shinglers, and merchant iron rollers continue well employed; hydraulic pressmen and armour plate workers continue very slack. Engineers report employment as good, with a large percentage working overtime. Iron and steel foundries, boiler and girder makers, Bessemer and Siemens steel workers, iron and steel dressers, railway spring makers, stove grate workers, and wire drawers report employment as good. Branches with 4,724 members have 42 (or 0.9 per cent.) unemployed, as against 32 (or 0.7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. At Barnsley engineers and moulders are making full time. Employment with ironworkers at Parkgate and Rotherham is moderate. At Parkgate, Icles, and Rotherham steelworkers are busy.

Cutlery and Tools.—The spring knife cutlers report employment as fair, except on best goods for the American market. Employment continues good with fileworkers, sawmakers, toolmakers, and table knife cutlers. Haft and scale pressers and wool shear grinders and benders report employment as improving. The razor smiths are quiet; bayonet and sword makers are slack. Branches with 5,602 members have 15 (or 0.3 per cent.) unemployed, as against 25 (or 0.4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Other Metal Trades.—Silversmiths report employment as good. Stampers, buffers and finishers are fairly employed. Brassworkers in all sections are well employed. Branches with 947 members in Sheffield again report only 3 unemployed. In Rotherham, Barnsley and Mexborough all sections of brassworkers are well employed.

Coal Mining.—Returns from 58 of the principal collieries in the district show an average working of five days per week; some small house coal pits have worked three or four days per week. Two large collieries have been standing during the past fortnight, owing to serious breakages in the machinery, about 2,400 men and boys being affected; a third colliery, employing 900 hands, has also been, standing two days from a similar cause. At several collieries there have been stoppages owing to scarcity of wagons.

Building Trades.—Masons are slack for want of stone. Bricklayers, carpenters, joiners and plumbers are all fairly well employed. Painters are much busier. Branches in Sheffield with 1,303 members have 12 (or 0.9 per cent.) unemployed, as against 34 (or 2.6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. In Rotherham and district employment is good, in Barnsley moderate.

Linen Trade.—Employment continues slack in all branches.

Clothing Trades.—Bespoke tailors are slack, employment in the ready-made trade is also quiet, and the boot and shoe workers are slack.

Glass Trades.—The glass bottle makers at Barnsley are busy; at

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (continued).—YORKS. AND MIDLAND COUNTIES.

Mexborough and Rotherham they are fairly well employed. There is considerable activity in the flint glass trade.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Employment with the letterpress and lithographic printers continues to improve; the bookbinders are well employed.

Woodworking and Coachbuilding Trades.—Cabinet-makers are well employed throughout the district. Railway carriage and wagon builders are busy; coachmakers are fairly well employed.

S. Utley.

ENGLAND: MIDLAND COUNTIES.

Derbyshire District.

General.—Branches of societies (exclusive of coal miners), with 6,269 members, have 81 (or 1.3 per cent.) on unemployed benefit, as against 170 (or 2.7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Engineering and allied Trades.—Employment in the locomotive works and other engineering branches, and in the bridge and girder yards is reported as good; with ironfounders as improving in Derby and Butterley, and in Chesterfield as good. Brass moulders and finishers in Derby and Burton-on-Trent report employment as good; iron wagon builders in Long Eaton as brisk. Lace machine builders are slack. Employment with cycle-makers and stove grate workers in Derby, Long Eaton, Langley Mill, and Belper is good. Branches with 2,262 members have 27 (or 1.2 per cent.) on unemployed benefit, as against 41 (or 1.8 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Coal Mining.—Employment generally remains fair. Returns from 56 collieries, employing over 30,000 men, show an average worked of rather more than 5 days per week.

Quarrying.—Employment continues fair in limestone quarries and in sawmill work.

Textile Trades.—Employment with cotton spinners and weavers is reported as fair in Belper; as moderate in Glossop, Borrowash, and Hadfield; with hosiery workers in Heanor and Belper as fair; and with dyers in Belper as slack. Lacemakers in Long Eaton and Ilkeston are fairly well employed. Surgical bandage makers report employment as moderate; elastic web weavers as dull, many working short time. Calico printers in Hayfield and Dinting report employment as moderate.

Building Trades.—Branches with 1,596 members have 7 (or 0.4 per cent.) on unemployed benefit, as against 58 (or 3.6 per cent.) of their membership) at the end of January. Employment generally is good, except with painters.

Clothing Trades.—Boot and shoe operatives, tailors, and dress and mantle-makers report employment as quiet.

Coachbuilding Trades.—Employment with railway carriage and wagon builders in Derby continues to improve, full time being worked in some departments. Wagon builders in Long Eaton are busy. Carriage builders in private shops are well employed.

Woodworking and Furnishing Trades.—In Burton-on-Trent the coopers report employment as good. Cabinet-makers continue well employed. In most timber yards employment continues regular.

Printing and kindred Trades.—The letterpress printers report employment as bad, the lithographic printers and bookbinders and machine rulers as fair.—C. White-Deacon.

Nottingham and District.

Lace Trade.—The levers and curtain branches report employment as quiet. The plain net branch continues well employed. Warp lace workers and warpers are slack. Curtain readers and correctors, designers, and draughtsmen are working short time. Female lace workers and auxiliary laceworkers report employment as moderate. Silk dressers report no improvement, still making five days per week. Dyers at Nottingham report employment as bad.

Hosiery.—Circular hosiery workers report employment as moderate; power-frame knitters as bad. The hand-frame and rib-top branches are fairly active in Nottingham, but slack at Sutton-in-Ashfield, Kirkby, and Arnold. Shetland shawl-makers report a slight improvement at Hucknall Torkard.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Employment in the cycle trade is very brisk at Colwick, Beeston, Nottingham and suburbs, overtime being general. Machine builders and general engineers and ironfounders report employment as moderate. Tool machinists, brassworkers, brass finishers, steam-engine makers, iron and steel dressers, stove gratefitters at Mansfield, and tool machinists at Beeston report employment as good; carriage straighteners as fairly

busy; wheelwrights and blacksmiths and farriers as moderate; blast furnacemen at Bulwell as slightly declining. Branches with 2,654 members report 71 (or 2.7 per cent.) as unemployed, against 33 (or 1.3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. In Grantham the wheelwrights, smiths, hammermen, and the engineers in the agricultural department report employment as moderate; the engineers in other branches, machine workers and tool machinists as fair; the ironfounders as slack.

Building Trades.—Employment generally is fairly good, except with painters, slaters, and tilers. Branches with 2,321 members return 73 (or 3.1 per cent.) as unemployed, against 159 (or 7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Coal Mining.—Employment generally has improved. Most pits have worked from 4 to 5 days per week, though a few are only making 2½ or 3 days per week. A marked improvement is noted in pits in North Notts.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress printers report employment as bad at Nottingham; bookbinders as good.

Miscellaneous.—Bespoke tailors report employment as slightly improved; ready-made clothing and mantle makers are steadily employed; boot and shoe operatives are very slack.

W. L. Hardestaff.

Leicester and Northampton District.

Boot and Shoe Industry.—The improvement noted last month has continued, and riveters, finishers, and machinists throughout the district, except at Hinckley, are in more regular employment. In some instances clickers are working overtime. Work is good with leather dressers, but slack with tanners and curriers at Northampton.

Hosiery, Yarn and Woolspinning Trades.—At Leicester there is a slight improvement in some departments. Employment is dull at Hinckley, except in the seamless branch, and slack at Loughborough. In the woolspinning mills work is less regular. It is moderate with trimmers, some being on short time, but better in the dyeing and scouring branches.

Clothing Trades.—Employment is better in the wholesale tailoring trade, and improving generally in the bespoke branch. Corset-makers continue busy, and work is improving with milliners and dressmakers. In the hatting trade employment is moderate.

Elastic Web and Rubber Trades.—In many departments of the elastic web trade employment is slacker. Work is good on cycle tyres.

Engineering and Cycle Trades.—All branches of the engineering trade, except boot and shoe machinery makers, report employment as good. Many smiths, turners, engine-builders, ironfounders, boiler-makers, electric-lampmakers, winders, and cycle-makers are working overtime.

Mining and Quarrying.—Employment at the South Leicester coal pits became slacker towards the end of February. Of 15 pits in Leicestershire from which reports have been received 2 worked 6 days per week, 4 worked 5 days and under 6, 5 worked 4 days and under 5, and 4 worked less than 4 days per week. Ironstone workers and stone quarrymen continue in full work.

Printing and Bookbinding Trades.—At Leicester, Loughborough, Northampton, and Kettering employment with letterpress and lithographic printers is reported as good. Bookbinders are working extra hours.

Building Trades.—Bricklayers and builders' labourers at Leicester, Northampton, Kettering and Hinckley are fully employed. Plasterers and stonemasons report employment as fair. It is regular with carpenters and joiners, with few unemployed; moderate with plumbers, and improving generally with house-painters and decorators.

Furnishing and Coachmaking Trades.—Employment has slightly improved with cabinet-makers, but is still slack with upholsterers. It is moderate with coachmakers and fairly good with tram and road-car builders. Railway-wagon makers and repairers are not quite so busy.

Miscellaneous.—With cigar-makers and railway servants employment is good. It is fair with farriers, and moderate with bakers and confectioners, basket-makers, and brushmakers.—T. Smith.

Potteries District.

Pottery Trade.—Hollow-ware pressers report a slight improvement, and average about 4 days per week. Sanitary ware pressers are well employed. Flat pressers are slack, those working averaging less than 3 days per week. Printers and transferrers, although busier, are still slack. Women gilders and decorators in the majority of cases are not working more than 2½ days

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (continued).—MIDLAND AND E. COUNTIES.

per week. Men artists on best goods are busy. Throwers and turners report a slight improvement in the open trade, but a decline in the electrical and furniture department.

Iron and Steel Trades.—The improvement at the forges throughout the district continues, but at the mills operatives are not working quite so well, three-quarter time prevailing at a few ironworks.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Engineers at Crewe, Stafford, and the Potteries, with 2,284 members, have 7 unemployed. At Burslem all firms are working full time.

Coal Mining.—The improvement is maintained at collieries around Talk-o'-th'-Hill, but in the Potteries and at Rugeley there is a slight falling off.

Textile Trades.—At Leek silk trimming weavers report employment as good. Hard silk workers are not so busy, but dyers are working overtime, and there are no silk operatives out of employment.

Clothing Trades.—Tailors report employment as slack in the Potteries, but improved at Crewe. Shoemakers at Stafford report an improvement, and a number are working overtime.

Building Trades.—In the Potteries bricklayers and carpenters report employment as moderate; at Newcastle-under-Lyme bricklayers are slack; at Leek all branches report employment as moderate; at Stafford and Crewe employment is improving.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Employment with the letterpress printers in the Potteries is bad; at Stafford, good. Lithographic artists and printers are well employed; bookbinders fairly well.

Miscellaneous.—Stone quarrymen at Alton and Hollington are busy. At Rugeley colour-makers and tanners are well employed. Railway servants at Stafford and the Potteries are busy; at Crewe a few are out of work.—I. S. Harvey.

Wolverhampton and District.

Iron and Steel Trades.—In South Staffordshire and East Worcester shire steel-smelters are fully employed, but employment in the steel and iron bar trade and the sheet trade has fallen off.

Engineering and allied Trades.—The engineers, boiler-makers, bridge builders, tank and gas-holder makers, and moulders report employment as good. Employment in Coalbrookdale and Wednesbury is reported as good; in Madeley as slightly improved.

Hardware Trades.—Employment in the chain trade has declined. Makers of anchors, vices, anvils, tubes, nuts and bolts, iron fences, hurdles, malleable nails and protectors, brassworkers, tipmakers, and tin and galvanized oddware workers are well employed.

Coal Mining.—In the Cannock Chase district employment has declined, the colliers not working more than half time. In Shropshire full time is being worked.

Building Trades.—Carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, and plumbers report employment as good; builders' labourers as fair; painters remain slack.

Glass Trades.—The flint glass workers report employment as good.

The glass bottle workers in Brierley Hill district are working short time.

Textile Trades.—At Kidderminster employment in the carpet trade has been slightly better, some weavers working overtime, but some are only partially employed. Spinners are fairly busy. Employment in Bridgnorth remains fair.

Clothing Trades.—Employment in both the ready-made and the bespoke tailoring trades is reported as quiet; in the boot and shoe trade as fairly good.—C. Anthony.

Birmingham and District.

Engineering.—All branches continue busy, especially cycle engineering. The majority are making overtime, and there are few unemployed.

Brass and Copper Working.—Employment in the chandelier electrolier, and gas fittings branch, and in the cabinet branch keeps good. Cased tube work is not so good as last month.

Jewellers, Silversmiths and Electro-platers.—Employment in the first two of these trades continues good. Electro-plate work is quiet, and several firms are making short time.

Other Metal Trades.—Metallic bedstead work is a little better. The ironfounders have only two unemployed. Iron-plate work is slightly better; braziers are busy, in other branches there is much short time.

Building Trades.—Bricklayers return employment as fair, plasterers and plumbers as good. Carpenters find work generally plentiful throughout the district.

Glass Trades.—The improvement in employment with flint glass makers is well maintained. Glass bevelling and silvering work is good. Other branches are fairly active.

Wood-working Trades.—Coopers are busy on wet work, but slack on dry work. Mill sawyers are busy; coachbuilders are well employed. Employment with cabinet-makers is fair.

Miscellaneous.—Printers are fairly well employed in Birmingham and busy in Coventry. Employment with brushmakers is dull. Short time prevails in ribbon-weaving in Coventry and to a less extent in watch-making.

W. J. Davis.

ENGLAND: EASTERN COUNTIES.

Norfolk and neighbouring District.

General.—Branches of societies with 2,623 members return 161 (or 61 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 326 (or 123 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Clothing Trades.—Ready-made tailoring factories in Norwich are on full time. Employment in the boot and shoe trade improved during the month, and full time was generally worked before the dispute which began on 27th February.

Building Trades.—In Norwich employment is dull; in all other parts of the district it is fair. Exclusive of labourers, branches with 1,513 members return 74 (or 49 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 282 (or 189 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Engineering and Shipbuilding.—Engineers are well employed at Norwich, Lynn and Thetford. At Yarmouth employment is dull, and several men have left the town.

Textile Industry.—The silk and crape factories at Norwich and Yarmouth are running full time.

Fishing Trades.—Trawl fishing has been fair at Lowestoft, but bad at Yarmouth.

Printing Trade.—Letterpress printers at Norwich and Fakenham are fairly well employed.

Miscellaneous.—Maltsters are still busy throughout the district. Labourers are fairly well employed, except at Cambridge.

G. Cleverley.

Suffolk, Essex, and District.

Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades.—Employment is reported as good with engineers at Bury St. Edmunds, Beccles, Colchester, and Chelmsford; moderate at Ipswich; dull at Leiston and Wickham Market. The boiler-makers at Ipswich report employment as moderate; shipwrights as fair.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (contd.).—EASTERN AND S.W. COUNTIES.

Clothing Trades.—The boot and shoe operatives report employment as fair at Ipswich, and dull at Colchester. In the wholesale tailoring trade employment is reported as dull at Ipswich and Colchester.

Textile Trades.—Employment is reported as good with the mat-weavers at Sudbury, Long Melford, and Lavenham; moderate at Hadleigh; and bad at Glemsford.

Building Trades.—Employment has improved, and reports from Ipswich, Felixstowe, Bury St. Edmunds, Beccles, Sudbury, Colchester, Clacton-on-Sea, Chelmsford, Braintree, and Southend are favourable.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Employment with letterpress printers is reported as good at Beccles and Bury St. Edmunds, moderate at Ipswich, dull at Colchester.

Miscellaneous.—Shipping and dock labour has improved at Ipswich; brickmakers are busy at Chelmsford; horticultural workers are well employed at Ipswich and Chelmsford.

R. W. Mather.

ENGLAND: SOUTH-WESTERN COUNTIES.

Bristol, Somerset, and Gloucestershire District.

General.—Societies with 7,607 members report 112 (or 15 per cent.) as unemployed, against 179 (or 24 per cent.) of their membership) at the end of January.

Building Trades.—Societies with 2,361 members report 27 (or 11 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 49 (or 21 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Mining and Quarrying.—Employment in the Radstock district has fallen off a little, the pits now working from four to six days per week. In the Forest of Dean employment in the house coal mines is reported as middling; in the steam coal and iron ore mines as good; in the stone quarries as fair.

Engineering and Allied Trades.—Branches of coachbuilders, ironfounders, hollow-ware workers, galvanisers, toolmakers and machinists report employment as good; shipwrights and boiler-makers on ship repairs as improving.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—Sailors and firemen report employment as fair; the dock and general labourers as slack.

Clothing Trades.—The bespoke tailors and wholesale garment-makers report employment as improving; the silk hatters as steady; the corset-makers as moderate.

Boot and Shoe Trades.—Employment continues slack at Kingswood, but has improved in Bristol.

Textile Trades.—Employment at Tiverton is reported as improving; at the Wellington and Westford Mills as moderate; at Trowbridge as slack.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Societies with 679 members report 24 (or 35 per cent.) as unemployed, against 35 (or 52 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—The upholsterers report employment as improving; the cabinet-makers and mill-sawyers as good; the brushmakers as declining; the polishers and coopers as dull.

Glass and Pottery Trades.—Employment with the glass bottle makers has improved; with the glass bevellers and with brick and tile makers it is good.—J. Curle.

Plymouth and South-Western District.

Mining, Quarrying and Clay Industries.—The metal mining industry of Cornwall shows no improvement, many men still being idle.

Engineering and allied Trades.—The engineers, ironfounders, brass-founders and finishers and boiler-makers, with a membership of 1,527, are fully employed. The wheelwrights and smiths continue fairly employed, but shipwrights are slack at some yards.

Clothing Trades.—Employment in the ready-made department of the tailoring trade has been fair; the bespoke branch has not shown much improvement.

Building Trades.—Employment continues quiet. Branches of masons, bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters and joiners, plumbers, and painters, with 2,432 members, have 96 (or 39 per cent.) unemployed, as against 85 (or 35 per cent.) at the end of January.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—Coal porters have been fairly busy, but with general cargo hands employment has been quiet at the quaysides and docks.

Printing Trades.—Employment with the letterpress printers has improved, fewer men being idle; lithographic printers remain slack.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—The upholsterers and French polishers are slack. Employment with the mill-sawyers and cabinet-makers is fair, with brushmakers moderate.

Miscellaneous.—The gasworkers show a decline. The fishing industry has shown but little improvement; brickmakers continue fairly employed. General labourers are slack.—J. Welland.

WALES.

North Wales District.

Mining.—Employment in the coal mines continues good. In the lead-mining industry employment is good in Flintshire and fair in Denbighshire.

Quarrying Industry.—Employment is good in the slate quarries of North Wales, except at the quarries closed owing to the dispute. It is good in the freestone and granite sett quarries; and fair in the limestone quarries.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Employment continues fair at the Brymbo steel works. It is reported as good at the tinplate works at Mold, at the spelter works at Mold and Baggilt, and in the railway wagon works at Johnstown.

Building Trades.—The bricklayers at Wrexham and Oswestry report employment as moderate; the carpenters and joiners at Wrexham as declining, and at Oswestry as slack; the painters at Wrexham as quiet; the plasterers as dull.

Brick and Terra Cotta Industries.—Employment continues good at Ruabon, Rhos, Penybon, Wrexham, Mold, and Buckley districts in all branches.

Chemical Trades.—Employment has been good in the chemical works at Flint and Ruabon.

Textile and Clothing Trades.—Employment is fair in the tweed and flannel industries of Montgomeryshire. The bespoke tailors at Bangor and Rhyl report employment as slack; and at Oswestry as much improved.—G. Rowley.

South Wales District.

Coal Mining.—Returns show that Ebbw Vale collieries are averaging about 4 1/2 days a week. Tredegar collieries are working full time. Blaina and Nantyglo collieries are working irregularly.

Building Trades.—All branches report employment as bad, and much interrupted by the weather, numbers of masons, plasterers, bricklayers, plumbers, painters and paper-hangers being out of work.

Ship Repairing and Engineering.—Except at Newport ship repairing yards have been fairly busy. Branches of the engineers, with 2,560 members, have 72 (or 28 per cent.) unemployed, as against 49 (or 2 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

The labourers in the ship-repairing yards, since the termination of a dispute, have had good employment. In the inland and colliery districts, foundries and engineering shops are reported as busy.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—Coal shipments have been above the average, and general cargo shipments moderate. Employment in the pitwood and iron ore trades has been moderate; in the corn,

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS (contd.)—WALES AND SCOTLAND.

fuel, and timber trades slack; with dock hoblors, fair. Shipment of crews has been quiet.

Iron and Steel Trades.—Returns from Blaenavon, Briton Ferry, Ebbw Vale, Dowlais, Cyfarthfa, Landore and Rogerstone state that furnaces and mills are going well, and several works are increasing their plant.

Miscellaneous.—Patent fuel works are slack, some being on short time, and others stopped. Chemical and smelting industries are slack; wagon-builders and lifters report employment as good; and letterpress printers as bad.—T. Davies.

The Tinplate Trade in South Wales, Monmouth and Gloucestershire.—There is little change in the condition of employment in this industry. No improvement is reported at Morrision, and considerable distress prevails. Many workpeople in the neighbourhood of Port Talbot, Kidwelly, and Buryport are unemployed. In Monmouthshire more than 75 per cent. of the mills are idle, but most of the tinplaters have obtained other employment. At 87 works, respecting which returns have been made, 334 mills were at work at the end of February, as compared with 332 at the end of January. Fifty-four works, with 290 mills, were giving full employment, and 21 works, with 132 mills, were idle. The remaining 12 works were giving partial employment, 44 of the mills being at work and 17 idle.

SCOTLAND.

Edinburgh and District.

General.—Branches with 15,451 members return 258 (or 1·6 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 270 (or 1·8 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Coal Mining.—Employment in Mid and East Lothian has declined somewhat. In West Lothian full time is generally being worked.

Mineral Oil Trades.—Employment continues good with all classes of workers. At the 27 shale mines in Mid and West Lothian from which returns have been received, full time has been worked. The number of men employed at these mines was 3,604, as compared with 3,774 in February 1896.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Branches with 2,329 members have 33 (or 1·4 per cent.) idle, as against 38 (or 1·7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. Branches of the engineering and metal trades in Falkirk, with 1,934 members, again report none idle.

Shipbuilding.—Employment has improved very much during the month. Three branches of boiler-makers and shipwrights, with 579 members, return 26 (or 4·5 per cent.) as idle, as against 76 (or 13·4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Textile Trades.—In Hawick and Galashiels most of the woollen mills are still running short time; in Selkirk there has been some improvement, some mills that were on short time being now fully employed. Employment in the hosiery trade in Hawick and Selkirk is generally good, although the hand-made department in Hawick continues slack. In Midlothian the carpet weavers report employment as good. Employment in the linen industry in Dunfermline shows a decline.

Building Trades.—Branches with 5,454 members have 127 (or 2·3 per cent.) idle, as against 75 (or 1·4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Woodworking and Furnishing Trades.—Branches with 1,030 members have 16 (or 1·5 per cent.) idle, as against 22 (or 2·1 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Shipping and Dock Labour.—The coal porters and dock labourers are fairly well employed. The sailors and firemen report a number unemployed owing to the Baltic being closed.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Branches with 2,269 members have 40 (or 1·8 per cent.) idle, the same percentage as at the end of January.

Miscellaneous.—The curriers and tailors report employment as improving; the bakers, shoemakers, saddlers and glasscutters as quiet; the settmakers and glassmakers as good.—J. Mallinson.

Glasgow and West of Scotland.

Shipbuilding.—Employment has continued good. Branches with 9,545 members have 454 (or 4·8 per cent.) idle, as against 401 (or 4·2 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Engineering and Metal Trades.—Reports from nearly all branches in the district are again favourable. Branches with 24,220 members return 431 (or 1·8 per cent.) as idle, the same percentage as at the end of January.

Mining.—In Stirlingshire employment is reported as still good, the average worked in the collieries being fully 5 days per

week. In nearly all the districts of Lanarkshire employment is steady; in Ayrshire good, the men as a rule getting full time. In Renfrewshire coal and ironstone miners continue fully employed.

Building Trades.—Reports are favourable throughout the district. Branches (not including painters) with 11,455 members return 96 (or 0·8 per cent.) as idle, the same percentage of their membership as at the end of January.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—Employment continues good. Branches with 3,991 members return 81 (or 2 per cent.) idle, as against 142 (or 3·6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Textile Trades.—Employment is dull with cotton, silk, woollen and mixed goods weavers in Glasgow. In Ayrshire employment is not so good as Galston, improving at Darvel, quiet at Newmilns, good at Kilbirnie, except with the netmakers. In Greenock the merino mills in the hosiery department are fairly busy, other departments are rather slack. In Port Glasgow the textile industry is busy. In Paisley the thread mills are slack. Employment in the carpet trade in Glasgow is good.

Clothing Trades.—Bespoke tailors report employment as improving; clothiers' operatives as fairly good in the ready-made tailoring trade. Boot and shoe makers report employment as slightly improved, but still dull; boot and shoe operatives and slipper and pump makers as unsatisfactory.

Dock Labour and Transport Trades.—Sailors and firemen report employment as improved; the dock labourers as good. The railway and tramway men, carters and hackney carriage drivers report that they are well employed.

Printing and kindred Trades.—The letterpress and lithographic printers report employment as slack; the bookbinders and calico engravers as dull; the electrotypers and stereotypers as busy.

Miscellaneous.—The spindle and flyer-makers report employment as excellent. Potters report all branches as busy; curriers as not so good; saddlers, bakers, brushmakers and bottle-makers as dull. A. J. Hunter.

Dundee and District.

Textile Trades.—Employment in the jute industry remains satisfactory, but in the linen trade shows no improvement.

Coal Mining.—Returns from pits employing nearly 12,000 work-people, show a weekly average of 5·06 days worked during the four weeks ended 20th February.

Engineering and Shipbuilding.—Employment in all branches of the engineering trades is brisk, and boiler-makers and iron and steel ship-builders report a decided improvement. Branches with 2,048 members report 50 (or 2·4 per cent.) as unemployed, as compared with 109 (or 5·3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Building and Woodworking Trades.—Employment in nearly all branches of the building trade has been good. Painters and plumbers show improvement. Employment in the furnishing trade is still quiet, and cabinet-makers and polishers are but moderately employed. Branches with 1,395 members return 33 (or 2·4 per cent.) as idle, as against 85 (or 6·0 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Dock and General Labour.—Employment at the docks has continued fairly busy. City labourers have been moderately employed.

Fishing Industry.—When the weather has permitted the line boats have proceeded regularly to sea, and fair takes of white fish have been obtained. The net salmon fishing was reopened on 11th February, but with indifferent success.

Miscellaneous.—The printing and kindred trades continue well employed. Tailors report employment as fair, and boot and shoe-makers as still quiet.—P. Reid.

Aberdeen and District.

General.—Branches with 4,092 members have 73 (or 1·8 per cent.) unemployed, as against 106 (or 2·7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Quarrying.—Blockers, drillers, cranemen and labourers report employment as exceptionally good. Settmakers are very busy, but material is scarce. Monumental masons and granite polishers report a slight improvement.

Building Trades.—Branches of joiners, plasterers, painters and plumbers, with 1,197 members, have 32 (or 2·7 per cent.) unemployed, as against 67 (or 5·5 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The masons report employment as good.

EMPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY—DISTRICT REPORTS.—SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

Shipbuilding and Engineering.—The boiler-makers and iron ship-builders, engineers, blacksmiths, ironmoulders, brassmoulders, and finishers, pattern-makers, tinplate workers, and horseshoers report employment as good; the shipwrights, as moderate. Branches with 1,105 members, return 18 (or 1·6 per cent.) as idle, against 14 (or 1·3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Letterpress and lithographic printers, bookbinders, and machine-rulers report employment as good.

Clothing and Textile Trades.—Boot and shoe makers (hand sewn), report employment as good; boot and shoe riveters and finishers, as moderate; flax, jute, and cotton operatives, as good; tailors, as quiet; carpet-weavers as very bad.

Transport Trades.—Railway servants report employment as good, seamen and firemen as fair.

Fishing.—In February, at the port of Aberdeen, the trawl and line boats landed 56,514 cwt., valued at £23,243, a marked increase in quantity, although not in value, over the previous month.

Miscellaneous.—Cabinet-makers report employment as fair; saw-millers as good; combmakers as good.—W. Johnston.

IRELAND.

Dublin and District.

Building Trades.—Employment has been fair generally, but with the painters, whiteners, paviors, and glaziers it has been dull. The plasterers were fully employed, one section working overtime. Branches (not including painters) with 2,993 members, return 201 (or 6·7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 376 (or 12·2 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Woodworking Trades.—Employment among the cart and wagon builders and organ builders is described as good; with the brush-makers, saddlers, coopers, and upholsterers as fair; and among the coachmakers and cabinet-makers as dull. Branches with 744 members, return 57 (or 7·7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 71 (or 9·5 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Metal Trades.—The brass moulders and finishers report employment as fair; the gasfitters as dull; the engineers, plumbers, and boiler-makers as good; the smiths as fair.

Printing and kindred Trades.—The letterpress printers report employment as good; the lithographers, stereotypers, machine assistants, and despatch assistants as fair; the bookbinders as dull. Branches with 1,230 members, return 58 (or 4·7 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 68 (or 5·4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January.

Clothing Trades.—The tailors report employment as bad. An improvement was noticeable among the boot and shoemakers.

Dock and Transport Labour.—Employment among the dock labourers has been exceptionally good. The seamen and firemen, engine-drivers, grain checkers, tram and railway men report employment as fair.—J. P. Nannetti.

Belfast and District.

General.—Societies with a membership of 20,899, report 487 (or 2·3 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 859 (or 4·3 per cent.) at the end of January.

Shipbuilding and Engineering.—Societies with 9,215 members, report 141 (or 1·5 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 371 (or 4·1 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The boiler-makers and iron shipbuilders report employment as slack; the furnishing trades as fair; the machine drillers and hole cutters as busy; the blacksmiths and strikers, engineers, brassfounders, carpenters and joiners, machine workers, pattern-makers, ironfounders, shipwrights, cranemen, and general labourers as good.

Linen Trades.—Societies with 5,175 members, return 103 (or 2 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 148 (or 3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of last month. The flax roughers report employment as bad; the powerloom tenters and powerloom yarn dressers as dull; the beetling enginemmen, flax dressers, yarn bundlers and women workers as fair; the hackle and gill makers, linen lappers and spindle and flyer-makers as good.

Building Trades.—Branches with 2,714 members, report 63 (or 2·3 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 155 (or 5·6 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The painters and plasterers report employment as fair; the bricklayers, hodsmen, woodworking machinists, plumbers, carpenters and joiners, as good.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—Societies with 565 members report 37 (or 6·5 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 50 (or 8·3 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The French polishers report employment as bad, the upholsterers as dull, the

coachbuilders and packing-case makers as fair, the cabinet-makers and coopers as good.

Printing and kindred Trades.—Branches with 870 members report 47 (or 5·4 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 60 (or 7 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The letterpress printers report employment as dull, lithographic printers as moderate, bookbinders and machine-rulers as fairly good, and the lithographic artists and designers as good.

Clothing Trades.—The boot and shoe operatives and the tailors, with 712 members, report 50 (or 7 per cent.) as unemployed, against 20 (or 2·8 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The boot and shoe makers report employment as bad, and the tailors as improving.

Miscellaneous.—Societies with 1,648 members return 46 (or 2·8 per cent.) as unemployed, as against 55 (or 3·4 per cent. of their membership) at the end of January. The bakers report employment as fair, the butchers as quiet, the railway servants as busy, and the carters, locomotive engine drivers, tinplate-workers and paviors as good.—R. Sheldon.

Cork and District.

Shipbuilding and Engineering.—Boiler makers and iron shipbuilders in Cork, Limerick, and Passage West report employment as fair. The engineers report employment as fair; the shipwrights and ship-joiners as dull.

Building Trades.—The various branches of these trades continue to send in favourable reports, members being well employed.

Textile and Clothing Trades.—Tweed, flax, and feather operatives throughout the district again report employment as steady; tailors and bootmakers as dull.

Furnishing and Woodworking Trades.—Millsawyers and coach-makers in all branches report employment as good; coopers throughout the district as dull.

Miscellaneous.—Bookbinders and lithographic printers report employment as fair; engine drivers and railway servants as good. Corporation and quay labourers and gasworkers are fairly well employed.—P. O'Shea.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Total Emigration.—The number of passengers who left the United Kingdom for places out of Europe during February was 9,470, as compared with 12,288 in February 1896.

British and Irish.—Of the 9,470 passengers, 6,778 were of British or Irish origin, being a decrease of 1,433 as compared with February 1896. There has been a decrease in the number of passengers to all the destinations specified in the table below, the United States showing the greatest decrease, viz. 1,220.

The figures for February 1897 and 1896 are as follows:—

Destination.	February 1897.	February 1896.
United States	2,925	4,145
Australia	512	554
South Africa	646	834
Other places	1,734	1,765
Totals	961	913
Totals	6,778	8,211

Foreign.—The remainder of the 9,470 passengers, viz. 2,692, were foreigners and others whose nationality was not distinguished, being 1,385 less than in February 1896.

Alien Immigration.—The number of aliens that arrived in the United Kingdom from the Continent during February was 3,964. Of these 1,263 were stated to be en route to America, compared with 1,988 so stated in February 1896. The number of those not stated to be on their way to America was 2,701 (including 850 sailors), the corresponding figure for February 1896 being 2,671 (including 688 sailors).

EXAMINATION FOR MINING MANAGERS' CERTIFICATES.

North Staffordshire, &c., District.—An examination for Certificates of Competency as Manager or Under-Manager of a mine will be held shortly. Intending candidates should at once communicate with the Secretary of the Examination Board, Mr. Joseph Knight, Newcastle, Staffordshire.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED IN FEBRUARY.

(Based on information obtained from all available sources, verified and corrected by direct application to the Employers, Trade Unions, and other parties concerned.)

Summary.—The changes in rates of wages reported during February affected a total number of about 50,000 workpeople, and the net effect of all the changes on the weekly wages of these persons is estimated to be an increase of 1s. 4d. per head.

Increases.—Of the 49,700 workpeople whose wages were advanced, over 44,000 were in the metal, engineering and shipbuilding group of industries. This number includes 11,500 shipyard helpers and labourers, and 3,500 shipwrights on the North-East Coast, 3,000 boiler-makers and iron shipbuilders in the Mersey district, 2,600 tinsplate, lamp and sheet metal workers in the Midlands, and 3,250 shipwrights and 2,650 ship-joiners on the Clyde.

Decreases.—The principal decrease was one of 5 per cent., sustained by about 260 chemical workers at Gateshead.

Method of Settlement.—Of the 50,000 workpeople whose wages were changed, about 5,000 received advances under sliding scale agreements, wages boards, &c., and 41,000 had their wages advanced after negotiation, mutual arrangement, or by the voluntary concession of employers.

NOTE.—It will be understood that increments accruing under scales of pay, as in the case of policemen, some municipal employees, and many railway servants, &c. are not recorded here. The same remark applies to changes in the pay of individuals, the grant of extra pay as compensation for extra work, &c.

Table with columns: Employment, Locality, Date of change, Approximate Number of workpeople directly affected, Particulars of Change, Estimated Rate of wages in a full week, exclusive of overtime, Increase or Decrease in a full week, exclusive of overtime. Includes sections for BUILDING TRADES, COAL MINING, STEEL MANUFACTURE, ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING.

* Where the winter and summer hours are known to differ in any trade, the weekly rate given in the table is the result of averaging the wages for five summer weeks and two winter weeks. When a change in wages is accompanied by a change in hours of labour, the weekly wages before and after change are computed on the basis of the old and new hours respectively.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED IN FEBRUARY—(continued).

Table with columns: Employment, Locality, Date of change, Approximate Number of workpeople directly affected, Particulars of Change, Estimated Rate of Wages in a full Week, exclusive of overtime, Increase or Decrease in a full week, exclusive of overtime. Includes sections for ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING TRADES, TINPLATE TRADE, OTHER METAL TRADES, TEXTILE TRADES, BOOT AND SHOE TRADE, EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, MISCELLANEOUS TRADES.

* See also under Changes in Hours of Labour. † These are in addition to the 400 who received the advance from 13th January. ‡ Temporary advance pending a general settlement. § The amounts given are for 54½ hours per week, but during the winter months the number of hours worked will be less, the rate of wages being changed from 80 much per day to 8½d. per hour for paviors, 5½d. for paviors' labourers, and 5d. for labourers and scavengers. ¶ These are in addition to the 41 published last month.

CHANGES IN RATES OF WAGES REPORTED IN FEBRUARY.—(continued).

Table with columns: Port, Voyage, Occupation, No. shipped at new Rate during Feb., Particulars of Change, Jan. 1896, Feb. 1897, Increase, Decrease.

CHANGES IN HOURS OF LABOUR REPORTED IN FEBRUARY.

THE changes in the hours of labour reported during February were all decreases, and affected about 3,500 workpeople. The average amount by which the working hours were shortened was 13 hours per week.

Table with columns: Employment, Locality, Date of change, Approximate number of work-people directly affected, Hours of labour in a full week (exclusive of overtime), Before change, After change, Extent of change per week.

DECREASES.

Table listing various trades and occupations such as Metal, Engineering and Shipbuilding, Ship repairing, Carpenters and Joiners, etc., with details on hours of labor changes.

*In some cases the winter hours for outside work were reduced from 48 to 47 for November and February, and from 42 to 41 for December and January.

INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS REGISTERED OR DISSOLVED IN FEBRUARY.

(Supplied to the Department by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies.)

THE summary given below of the changes in the Register of Industrial Organisations during February shows that 2 Trade Unions, 3 Co-operative Associations for Distribution, 10 Co-operative Associations for Production, 2 Miscellaneous Co-operative Associations, 15 new Friendly Societies, and 16 new branches of existing Friendly Societies have been added to the Register for the United Kingdom during the past month.

Five Industrial and Provident Societies and 20 Building Societies are returned as having sent notice of commencement of dissolution or as having ceased to exist.

NEW ORGANISATIONS REGISTERED.

Trade Unions.—England and Wales.—Tamworth Builders' Labourers' Trade Society, Society's Hall, Church St., Tamworth. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—National Operative Slaters and Tilers' Trade Union of the City of Dublin, 128 Capel St., Dublin.

Industrial and Provident Societies.—(A) Associations for Distribution.—England and Wales.—Tonbridge Industrial Co-op. Society, Ltd., 149 Vale Rd., Tonbridge; Milnrow Co-op. Society, Ltd., Dale St., Milnrow; Midsomer Norton District Produce Supply Association, Ltd., Farmers' Depot, Market Place, Midsomer Norton. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—None.

(B) Associations for Production.—England and Wales.—None. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—Ten Co-op. Agric. and Dairy Soc. at Omagh, co. Tyrone; Ballacolla, Queen's co.; Soeey, Rivers-town, co. Sligo; Achony, co. Sligo; Ennisrone, co. Sligo; Ballymote, co. Sligo; Dromore, co. Down; Adare, co. Limerick; Harp, Trillick, co. Tyrone; Shaneragh, co. Tyrone.

(C) Miscellaneous.—England and Wales.—Clethorpes W. M. Reading Room and Club Soc., Ltd., 11 and 13 Seaview Street, Clethorpes; Watford Mortgage and Land Investment Soc., Ltd., 40 High Street, Watford. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—None.

Friendly Societies.—(A) New Friendly Societies.—England and Wales.—Ordinary Friendly, 2; Specially authorised, 1; Working Men's Clubs, 5; Dividing, 3; Female, 1. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—Ordinary Friendly, 1; Specially Authorised, 2.

(B) New Branches.—England and Wales.—A. O. Foresters, 4; I. O. Rechabites, S. U., 3; N. U. O. F. Gardeners, 2; Various, 2. Scotland.—Various, 4. Ireland.—I. O. Rechabites, S. U., 1.

OLD ORGANISATIONS DISSOLVED.

Industrial and Provident Societies.—England and Wales.—By Instrument.—Little Eaton Hand-in-Hand Ind. Co-op. Soc., Derby. Registry cancelled by request.—Friern Barnet and Muswell Hill Co-op. Soc. Liquidators' final returns received.—Kensington and Notting Hill Co-op. Ind. Soc.; Childs Hill and Cricklewood Co-op. Soc.; Harlesden Co-op. Ind. Soc.

Building Societies.—England and Wales.—By instrument of dissolution, 8; notice of commencement of dissolution, 4; notice of termination of dissolution, 7; notice of winding up, 1. Scotland.—None. Ireland.—None.

DISEASES OF OCCUPATIONS.

Table showing number of cases of Lead and Phosphorus poisoning, or Anthrax, reported as having occurred in factories and workshops during February, classified by industries:—

Table with columns: Disease and Industry, Adults, Young Persons, Children, Total, Grand Total.

* Males. † Females.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS REPORTED IN FEBRUARY.

THE numbers of workpeople of the undermentioned classes killed or injured by accidents reported in February 1897 and 1896 respectively are shown in the following table. From this it appears that the numbers killed and injured were more in February 1897 than in February 1896, the totals killed being 360 and 343, and the totals injured 5,149 and 4,462 respectively.

SUMMARY.

Table with columns: Occupations, Killed (Feb. 1897, Feb. 1896), Injured (Feb. 1897, Feb. 1896).

The particulars are given in greater detail in the following Tables:—

I. Railway Servants.

(Supplied by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade.)

Table showing the number of railway servants reported as killed or injured by accidents in which the movement of railway vehicles was concerned during the month of February 1897.

(The number of Servants employed by the Railway Companies of the United Kingdom was 465,112 on 31st December, 1895.)

Table with columns: Class of Service, Killed, Causing Amputations, Dislocations, Fractures, Contusions and Bruises, Cuts, Sprains, Burns, &c., Unspecified and Miscellaneous Injuries, Total Injured.

NOTE.—In addition to the above the companies have reported 14 servants killed and 1,088 injured by accidents occurring on the companies' premises, but in which the movement of vehicles was not concerned, during February, as compared with none killed and 705 injured in February 1896.

II. Miners and Quarrymen.*

Table showing the number of persons reported as killed or injured in and about mines and quarries during the month of February 1897.

(The number of persons employed in and about mines was returned as 733,657, and in and about quarries as 104,625 in 1895.)

Table with columns: Cause of Accident, Number of Persons (Killed, Injured), Cause of Accident, Number of Persons (Killed, Injured).

* Supplied by the Home Office.

III. Seamen (Fatal and Non-fatal Accidents). (Supplied by the Registrar-General of Shipping and Seamen.) Table showing the number of persons forming the crews of registered vessels of the undermentioned classes, belonging to the British Islands, reported during the month of February 1897 as having been killed or injured by accidents at sea, or in rivers or harbours. [The returns of non-fatal injuries are probably far from complete, the tabulation being first made in February 1896.]

Table with columns: Cause and Class of Accident, On Trading Vessels, On Fishing Vessels, Total in Feb. 1897, Total for 3 months Dec. 1896 to Feb. 1897, Corresponding total for 3 months of 1895-6.

NOTE.—Deaths or injuries on yachts and vessels employed exclusively in rivers and inland navigation, and injuries on fishing vessels employed in and out of Scottish Ports, and on vessels trading exclusively between Scottish Ports, or to Asiatics serving under Asiatic articles of agreement, are not included.

IV. Factory and Workshop Operatives.*

Table showing the number of persons reported to H.M. Chief Inspector by Certifying Surgeons as killed or injured during the month of February 1897, distinguishing Factories and Workshops. †

(The classes of accidents reported are those specified in Section 18 (2) of the Factory and Workshop Act of 1895.)

Table with columns: Class of Accident, Number of Males, Number of Females, Total Males and Females.

* Supplied by the Home Office. † There were also 1,725 other non-fatal accidents only reported to H.M. Inspectors, viz., 1,719 in Factories and 6 in Workshops.

V. Accidents reported under Notice of Accidents Act, 1894.

(Supplied by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade.) Table showing the number of persons killed and injured in accidents reported to the Board of Trade under the Notice of Accidents Act, 1894, during the month of February 1897.

Table with columns: Nature of Works, Construction or Repair, Use or Working, Number of Persons, Injured.

* Accidents during the working of railways being reportable under other Acts are not notified under the Act of 1894. † Authorised by any local or personal Act of Parliament. ‡ Or other steam engine or machine in the open air.

TRADE DISPUTES IN FEBRUARY.

(Based on information obtained from all available sources, verified and corrected by direct application to the Employers, Trade Unions, and other parties concerned.)

Number and Magnitude.—Sixty-six fresh disputes occurred in February 1897, compared with 48 in January, and 78 in February 1896. In these disputes 23,671 workpeople were involved, compared with 16,615 in January and nearly 17,000 in February 1896. For the two completed months of 1897 the aggregate number of workpeople involved in disputes which commenced in those months was about 40,000, as compared with nearly 24,500 in the corresponding months of 1896.

Trades Affected.—In the building trades 6 disputes occurred, involving 334 workpeople; mining, 5 disputes, involving 1,848 workpeople; metal, engineering and shipbuilding trades, 23 disputes, involving 8,552 workpeople; textile trades, 19 disputes, involving 5,700 workpeople; clothing trades, 4 disputes, involving 1,263 workpeople; railway service, 1 dispute, involving 5,165 workpeople; and in the miscellaneous group of industries, 8 disputes, involving 809 workpeople.

Causes.—Of the 66 disputes 27 arose chiefly on wages questions, 17 on questions of working arrangements or quality of material supplied, 2 on questions of unionism, 9 on questions connected with fines and deductions, 2 were on questions of the reduction of the hours of labour, 5 were in sympathy with or for reinstatement of discharged colleagues and officials, and 4 arose from other causes.

Results.—Forty-three new disputes, involving 21,046 workpeople, and 9 old disputes, involving 2,333 workpeople, were reported as settled. In 18 of these disputes, involving 6,044 persons, the workpeople were successful; in 13, involving 3,477 persons, partially successful; in 18, involving 7,738 persons, unsuccessful; and in the remaining 3 disputes, involving 6,120 persons, work was resumed by the employees pending consideration of the questions at issue.

Number of Working Days Lost.—The number of working days lost in February owing to labour disputes, new and old, was about 220,000, as compared with 310,000 in January, making a total for the first two months of 1897 of 530,000 working days lost.

I.—DISPUTES WHICH BEGAN IN FEBRUARY 1897.

Table with columns: Trade, Locality, Date when Dispute began, Alleged Cause or Object, No. of Workpeople Affected, Total Duration of Dispute in Working Days, Result.

TRADE DISPUTES IN FEBRUARY—(continued).

Table with columns: Trade, Locality, Date when Dispute began, Alleged Cause or Object, No. of Workpeople Affected, Total Duration of Dispute in Working Days, Result.

II. DISPUTES WHICH BEGAN BEFORE FEBRUARY AND WERE SETTLED DURING THAT MONTH.

Table with columns: Trade, Locality, Date when Dispute began, Alleged Cause or Object, No. of Workpeople Affected, Total Duration of Dispute in Working Days, Result.

III.—DISPUTES WHICH BEGAN IN JANUARY, BUT OF WHICH INFORMATION HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN OBTAINED:—

Table with columns: Trade, Locality, Date when Dispute began, Alleged Cause or Object, No. of Workpeople Affected, Total Duration of Dispute in Working Days, Result.

IV.—DISPUTES WHICH BEGAN BEFORE FEBRUARY, AND WERE STILL UNSETTLED AT THE END OF THAT MONTH.

The following disputes, the commencement of which have previously been reported, were still unsettled at the end of February:— Disputes commencing in February 1896: fustian weavers, Norden; June: cotton spinners, Slaithwaite; July: engineers, Shipley; August: cotton weavers, Padiham; September: quarrymen, Bethesda; October: plate and machine moulders, Burnley; brassworkers, Rotherham; brassfounders, London, E.C.; coffin furniture hands, Birmingham; cotton operatives, Oldham; November: steel smelters and millmen, Brymbo; fitters and turners, Colne; flaxdressers, Belfast; cased-tube workers, Birmingham; shoemakers, Edinburgh (since settled, March); cabinet-makers, Shipley and district; bakers, Plymouth; December: plasterers, Ipswich; plasterers and plasterers' labourers, Douglas, fitters, &c., Earlestown; January 1897: Slaters, Aberdeen (since settled, March 9th); blacksmiths, Stockton and Hartlepool; ironworkers, Wishaw (since settled, March 8th); joiners, Leeds; boot and shoe operatives, Cork; French polishers, London, E.C. (since settled, March).

FOREIGN TRADE FOR FEBRUARY.

Imports.—The total declared value of the imports during February was £37,245,164, an increase over the amount for February 1896 of £1,768,428, or 5.0 per cent. During the first two months of the year the increase amounted to £3,270,240, or 4.4 per cent.

The following table shows the declared values of the imports, grouped in large classes, for February 1897 and 1896, respectively:—

Table with 5 columns: Class of Goods, February, 1897, February, 1896, Increase, Decrease. Rows include Food, Drink, and Tobacco; Metals; Oils, Chemicals, Dyeing and Tanning Substances; Raw Materials for Manufacture; Manufactured Articles; Miscellaneous; Totals.

The increase in the value of foodstuffs imported is chiefly due to an increase of £979,505 in the imports of wheat, wheat meal, and flour, other articles showing substantial increases being cheese, cured or salted fish, coffee and tea. On the other hand sugar continues to show a decline, amounting in February to £994,204. Among metals the chief increases are in copper (£97,460), and iron and steel (£180,763). In the group of oils, &c., most classes of goods show a falling off in the value imported. Raw cotton continues to show an increase in quantity of 398,262 cwts. and in value of £697,349, mostly from the United States. Sheep and lambs' wool has increased by £271,547, but hemp has decreased by £145,325. Manufacturers of iron (including machinery and cycles) show an increase in value imported of £180,669.

British and Irish Exports.—The exports during February were of a declared value of £17,864,682, being a decrease of £1,839,413 (or 9.3 per cent) upon the amount for February, 1896. This brings the total decrease for the two completed months of 1897 to £3,199,668, or 7.8 per cent.

The following table shows the declared value of the exports, grouped in large classes, for February 1897 and 1896:—

Table with 5 columns: Class of Goods, Feb. 1897, Feb. 1896, Increase, Decrease. Rows include Articles of Food and Drink; Raw Materials; Yarns and Textile Fabrics; Metals and Articles manufactured therefrom; Machinery and Mill Work; Miscellaneous; Totals.

Among articles of food and drink the principal increase is in the export of British and Irish spirits. Coal, coke, and patent fuel show an increase of 31,736 tons in quantity, and of £9,183 in value exported, and sheep and lambs' wool also shows a noticeable increase. Textiles show decreases in most classes, the largest falling off being in cotton piece goods, which have decreased by over 89 million yards in quantity, and by £841,274 in value, largely due to decreased exports to Bombay and China. Woollen and worsted tissues show a decline of £461,569. In the group of metals iron continues to show an increase, and copper a decrease in the value exported. The increase shown under machinery and mill work was in the class of steam engines, other descriptions of machinery showing a decrease.

Re-exports of Foreign and Colonial Merchandise.—These amounted in February to £5,224,138 as compared with £5,617,593 in February of last year.

Tonnage of Vessels entered and cleared.—The total tonnage of vessels entered at ports in the United Kingdom in February from Foreign Countries and British Possessions was 2,483,403 tons, being an increase of 128,087 tons on the figures for February 1896. The tonnage cleared was 2,687,803, or 4,970 tons less than in

February of last year. The tonnage of vessels entered Coastwise amounted to 2,558,246 tons, or 97,426 less than in February 1896, and of vessels cleared the tonnage was 2,482,783, an increase of 9,961 tons over the figure for the corresponding month of last year.

MISCELLANEOUS TRADE NOTES.

Cotton Statistics.—The imports of raw cotton during February were nearly 25 per cent. more than in February 1896, this increase being chiefly due to American cotton, 76,174 more bales of that class having been imported than in the corresponding month of 1896. As compared with February 1895, the total imports show a decrease of 18 per cent. The quantity forwarded from ports to inland towns was more than in the corresponding month of 1896 or 1895. The following are the figures for the different periods:—

Table with 4 columns: February 1897, 1896, 1895. Rows include Imports, Forwarded from Ports to Inland Towns, Exports.

Traffic Receipts.—The total receipts of 21 of the principal railways of the United Kingdom during the four weeks ended February 27th amounted to £5,433,293, being £116,304 (or 2.2 per cent.) more than for the corresponding period of 1896. The receipts from passenger traffic were £2,056,837, an increase of £28,099, while the receipts from goods and mineral traffic amounted to £3,376,456, an increase of £88,205.

Bankruptcies.—The bankruptcies gazetted during February numbered 348, being 11 more than in February 1896, 8 more than in February 1895, and 56 less than in February 1894.

Fishery Statistics.—The total value of the fish (including shellfish) landed on the coasts of the United Kingdom during February was £509,030, a decrease of £12,679 as compared with February 1896. In England and Wales the decrease amounted to £23,680; in Ireland £383; while in Scotland there was an increase of £11,384.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES, 1895.

The report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies* (Part B), has been issued during the month, and contains the returns made by Industrial and Provident Societies in the United Kingdom for the year 1895. There were 2,045 societies on the register at the end of the year, 1,577 being in England and Wales, 355 in Scotland, and 113 in Ireland.

Returns were received from 1,921 societies, these being divided upon the plan adopted last year into "Societies carrying on Industries and Trades,—1,695, Societies carrying on Businesses,—112, and Land and Building Societies,—114.

Of the 124 societies which failed to make returns, all but 21 (of which 20 are in Ireland), are accounted for by the fact of the societies having been in existence less than one year, or having ceased to exist, or being in course of winding up.

During 1895, 123 new societies were registered—68 in England and Wales, 10 in Scotland, and 45 in Ireland—and 47 in England and Wales, and 3 in Scotland were dissolved or otherwise removed from the register.

Of 1,695 societies carrying on "industries or trades," 1,089 report that they give credit under varying conditions, and 538 state that they do not give credit. Of the societies reporting upon this point, 64.4 per cent. in England and Wales, 77.3 per cent. in Scotland, and 63 per cent. in Ireland give credit to a greater or less extent.

Inspectors of Factories and Mines: New Addresses.—The address of Mr. John Law, H.M. Inspector of Factories, is now 342 Burley-hill, Leeds. The address of Mr. J. H. Nicholl, H.M. Inspector of Factories, is now Old Swinford, Stourbridge. Mr. R. Donald Bain's new address is: H.M. Inspector of Mines, Durham. Mr. W. N. Atkinson's new address is: H.M. Inspector of Mines, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent.

* Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year ending 31st December 1895. Part B, Industrial and Provident Societies, 94, I. Price 11d

PAUPERISM IN FEBRUARY.

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

The number of persons relieved in 35 selected urban districts of the United Kingdom on one day in the second week of February was 343,130. This corresponds to a rate of 219 per 10,000 of the estimated population of these districts in 1897.

Compared with January last there is an increase of 5,963 in the number relieved, and of 4 in the rate per 10,000. The rate increased slightly in nearly all the districts, the largest increases per 10,000 being in the Bristol district (16), and Coatbridge and Airdrie (12). All the London districts show increases, the increase on the whole in the metropolitan rate amounting to 6 per 10,000. In West Ham, Leeds, and the Cork, Waterford, and Limerick district the rate was unchanged, and in five districts it decreased slightly.

Compared with February 1896 the number relieved is less by 1,240 and the rate per 10,000 by 3. The decrease was principally in outdoor pauperism. In ten districts the rate has increased, the largest increases being in Coatbridge and Airdrie (21), Paisley and Greenock (20), Dublin (12), Cork, Waterford and Limerick (11). In the Bristol and Belfast districts the rate remained the same; while in the remaining 23 districts the greatest decreases took place in Barnsley (25), Stockton and Tees (23), West Ham (21), Hull (20), Nottingham and Wolverhampton (15 each), and Sheffield (9).

Table with 4 columns: Selected Urban Districts, Paupers on one day in second week of February 1897, Paupers on corresponding date in previous year. Rows include In-door, Out-door, TOTAL, Rate per 10,000 of estimated Population, Total Number, Rate per 10,000 of estimated Population.

Table with 6 columns: ENGLAND & WALES*, Metropolitan, West District, North District, Central District, East District, South District, Total Metropolitan, West Ham.

Table with 6 columns: Other Districts, Newcastle District, Stockton & Tees District, Bolton, Oldham, &c., Wigan District, Manchester District, Liverpool District, Bradford District, Halifax & Huddersfield, Leeds District, Barnsley District, Sheffield District, Hull District, North Staffordshire, Nottingham District, Leicester District, Wolverhampton District, Birmingham District, Bristol District, Cardiff & Swansea, Total "Other Districts".

Table with 6 columns: SCOTLAND*, Glasgow District, Paisley & Greenock Dist., Edinburgh & Leith Dist., Dundee & Dunfermline, Aberdeen, Coatbridge & Airdrie, Total for the above Scottish Districts, IRELAND†, Dublin District, Belfast District, Cork, Waterford & Limerick District, Galway District, Total for the above Irish Districts, Total for above 35 districts in February, Total for previous month.

Table with 6 columns: SCOTLAND*, Glasgow District, Paisley & Greenock Dist., Edinburgh & Leith Dist., Dundee & Dunfermline, Aberdeen, Coatbridge & Airdrie, Total for the above Scottish Districts, IRELAND†, Dublin District, Belfast District, Cork, Waterford & Limerick District, Galway District, Total for the above Irish Districts, Total for above 35 districts in February, Total for previous month.

Table with 6 columns: SCOTLAND*, Glasgow District, Paisley & Greenock Dist., Edinburgh & Leith Dist., Dundee & Dunfermline, Aberdeen, Coatbridge & Airdrie, Total for the above Scottish Districts, IRELAND†, Dublin District, Belfast District, Cork, Waterford & Limerick District, Galway District, Total for the above Irish Districts, Total for above 35 districts in February, Total for previous month.

* Exclusive of Vagrants; of Patients in the Fever and Small-pox Hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and of Lunatics in Asylums, Registered Hospitals and Licensed Houses.

† Excluding Casuals, but including persons maintained in Institutions for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, &c., who are classified as not able-bodied.

WORK OF LABOUR BUREAUX IN FEBRUARY.

DURING February 2,112 fresh applications for work were registered by the 13 bureaux making returns. Private employers engaged 610 persons, and local authorities 555. Of the 3,245 workpeople remaining on the registers at the end of the month, 1,975 were men, 146 lads and boys, and 1,124 women and girls.

Comparing the figures of the 11 bureaux which also furnished returns for February 1896, the number of fresh applicants for work decreased by about 42 per cent.

(I). Work Done in February.

Table with 10 columns: Name and Address of Labour Bureau, No. of Fresh Applications by Workpeople during, No. of Situations offered by Employers during, No. of Workpeople found by Bureaux, Engaged by Private Employers, Engaged by Local Authorities. Rows include London (St. Pancras, Battersea, Islington, St. Martin, Hackney, Salvation Army, Y.W.C.A.), Provincial (Salford, Ipswich, Plymouth, Liverpool, Glasgow), Total.

(II). Workpeople on Registers at end of February classified by Occupations

Table with 10 columns: Name of Labour Bureau, Men (Building, Engineering, Metal Trades, Carmen, Stablemen, Horsemen, Clerks and Warehousemen, Porters and Messengers, General Labourers, Other Occupations, Total Men). Rows include London (St. Pancras, Battersea, Islington, St. Martin, Hackney, Salvation Army), Provincial (Salford, Ipswich, Plymouth, Liverpool, Glasgow), Total Number.

Table with 10 columns: Name of Labour Bureau, Women and Girls (Lads and Boys, Char-women, Daily Work, &c., Servants, Dress-makers and Sempstresses, Others, Total Women and Girls, Grand Total). Rows include London (St. Pancras, Battersea, Islington, St. Martin, Hackney, Salvation Army, Y.W.C.A.), Provincial (Salford, Ipswich, Plymouth, Liverpool, Glasgow), Total Number.

* New register opened 1st January 1897.

† Not furnished. ‡ Women and Girls are not registered.

INDUSTRIAL PROSECUTIONS IN FEBRUARY

I.—Under Factory and Workshop Acts.*

Nature of Offence.	Informations laid.	Con- victions	Amount of Penalties.	Amount of Costs.
By Owners, Managers, &c. :-				
Neglecting to Limewash	2	2	£ s. d. 1 5 0	£ s. d. 2 17 0
Neglecting to Fence Machinery	9	8	28 13 9	5 17 3
Employing Young Persons without necessary Certificates	22†	28	20 17 6	10 11 7
Illegal Hours or Times of Employment—				
Before or after the legal hour	26†	32	14 2 6	12 18 7
During meal times, or without proper intervals for meals	11	11	10 0 0	4 2 0
Beyond legal hour on Saturday or day substituted	8	8	2 2 6	12 6
On Sundays or holidays, or children on successive Saturdays	13†	13	7 0 0	6 6 0
At night	17	16	15 10 0	7 7 0
Employing children full time, otherwise than in morning and afternoon sets, &c... ..	1†	2	1 0 0	
Neglecting Rules as to Registers, Abstracts, Notices, &c. :-				
Not keeping Registers	4	4	3 5 0	1 18 6
Not affixing or properly filling up Notices and Abstracts	2†	4	4 0 0	0 17 11
Not sending Notices required by Act	7	7	8 5 0	2 17 8
Not supplying sufficient or correct particulars Prosecutions for breach of (or not affixing) Special Rules	15	15	3 5 0	6 2 6
4	3	3 3 0	16 0	
By Workmen :-				
Obstructing an Inspector in the execution of his duty	1	1	1 0 0	0 16 0
By Parents :-				
Allowing children to be employed full time... ..	1	1	0 5 0	0 8 0
Total for Feb. 1897	143†	155	123 14 3	63 8 0
Total for Feb. 1896	166†	171	118 17 6	63 14 6

II.—Under the Mines and Quarries Acts.*

Nature of Offence.	Prosecu- tions.	Con- victions.	Cases with- drawn.	Cases dis- missed.	Amount of Fines and Costs.
UNDER THE MINES ACTS.					
By Owners, Managers, &c. ...					
Fencing	2	—	2	—	£ s. d. — — —
Ventilation	2	1	—	1	1 12 6
Miscellaneous	24	14	5§	5	20 7 0
By Workmen :-					
Safety Lamps	6	6	—	—	5 11 6
Shot-firing and Explosives	12	12	—	—	10 0 6
Lucifer Matches, &c.	4	4	—	—	2 17 8
Riding on Trams	3	3	—	—	4 8 6
Miscellaneous	19	18	1	—	16 16 6
Total for Feb. 1897	72	58	8	6	61 14 2
Total for Feb. 1896	28	28	—	—	29 15 1
UNDER THE QUARRIES ACT.					
By Owners, Managers, &c. :-					
Abstracts, Registers, Notices	2	2	—	—	£ s. d. 0 14 0
Fencing	6	3	—	3	1 19 0
Other Special Rules	4	4	—	—	1 8 0
By Workmen :-					
—	—	—	—	—	—
Total for Feb. 1897	12	9	—	3	4 1 0
Total for Feb. 1896	—	—	—	—	—

III.—Under Merchant Shipping Acts.

(Supplied by the Solicitor's Department, Board of Trade.)

Nature of Offence.	Prosecu- tions.	Con- victions.	Penalties.	Costs.
By Owners or Masters of Ships :-				
Submerging disc	4	4	£ s. d. 115 0 0	£ s. d. 12 12 6
Carrying excessive deck cargoes	3	3	41 0 0	2 18 4
Not providing lights or look-out or life-saving appliances	2	2	2 16 6	3 0 0
By Seamen :-				
Frauds in connection with dis- charge note... ..	3	3	1 0 0	0 7 0**
Giving false name or falsely stating last ship	1	1	1 0 0	0 6 6
Total for Feb. 1897	13	13	160 16 6	19 4 4
Total for Feb. 1896	9	9	40 19 0	10 7 6

*Supplied by the Home Office.

† The number of convictions in these cases is greater than the number of informations laid, the practice in Scotland being to lay one information against one person, however many offences he is charged with.

‡ Two of these informations were laid by a Mines Inspector, resulting in two convictions, with a penalty of 10s. and £3 11s. costs.

§ One case withdrawn on payment of costs.

|| Costs remitted in one case.

¶ One case "not proven."

** One defendant fined, one defendant cautioned, and the third defendant sent to prison for one month with hard labour.

RECENT PROGRESS IN CO-OPERATION.

England and Wales.—During February three new co-operative societies for distribution were registered. One society at Long Eaton was dissolved and one at Friern Barnet had its registry cancelled.

The report of the English Co-operative Wholesale Society for the quarter ended December 26th, 1896 shows that the federation included 1,044 societies, with a total membership of 993,564, and that its sales in its distributive departments during the quarter amounted to £3,087,848, as compared with £2,807,483 in the corresponding period of 1895, an increase of 10 per cent.

In the manufacturing departments the sales, *i.e.*, transfers to distributive departments during the quarter, amounted to £304,850, as compared with £252,688 in the corresponding period of 1895, an increase of 20.6 per cent.

During the whole of the year 1896, the distributive sales of the society amounted to £11,115,056, as compared with £10,141,917 in 1895, an increase of 9.6 per cent.

The Committee of the Wholesale Society has issued to its shareholding societies a proposal for the establishment of a superannuation fund for such of its employees under the age of 40 years as are willing to contribute 2½ per cent. of their earnings to the fund, the society contributing out of its profits an amount equal to the total contributions of the employees. Special provisions are made for employees over 40 years of age joining the fund. Contributing employees at the age of 60 are to be entitled to cease contributions and to receive an allowance during life, varying in amount according to length of service, and the average amount of earnings. The proposed scale of allowance ranges from 25 per cent. of the average wages for 10 years membership to 67 per cent. for 45 years or upwards.

Returns received from 678 distributive societies in England and Wales with a total membership of 971,075 show that the average dividend paid upon members' purchases during the fourth quarter of 1896 was 2s. 7.92d. in the £1.

Two productive workshops have been opened by Trade Unionists during the month, *viz.*, a co-operative slipper-making workshop in Leeds and a co-operative bakery in East London. Both are unregistered.

Scotland.—No new societies have been registered during the month in Scotland. The report of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society for the half-year ended December 26th, 1896, shows that the federation included 284 societies, with a total membership of 189,763, and that its sales in its distributive departments during the half-year amounted to £2,033,318, as compared with £1,825,273 in the corresponding period of 1895, an increase of 11.4 per cent.

In the manufacturing departments the sales and transfers to distributive departments during the half-year amounted to £409,819, as compared with £315,581 in the corresponding period of 1895, an increase of 29.9 per cent. A sum of £3,403 is allotted out of profits to the employees in the distributive and productive departments, as a bonus of eightpence in the £ upon their wages for the half-year. A report upon the financial position of the farm worked by the society, shows a loss of £2,280 during the year ended December 19th, 1896.

For the whole of the year 1896 the distributive sales of the society amounted to £3,822,581, as compared with £3,449,462 in 1895, an increase of 10.8 per cent.

Returns received from 131 distributive societies in Scotland (including two in Ireland), with a total membership of 170,183, show that the average dividend paid upon members' purchases during the fourth quarter of 1896 was 2s. 11.½d. in the £.

Ireland.—Ten new co-operative agricultural and dairy societies were registered during February.

The Irish Co-operative Agency Society reports that its total sales during the year 1896 amounted to £110,726, as compared with £75,923 in 1895, an increase of 45.8 per cent.

The second annual report of the Agricultural Credit Bank, established at Doneraile, shows that at the end of 1896 it had 71 members, 64 of whom had borrowed loans during the year amounting to a total of £220. The repayments were made in 823 instalments, varying in amount from 6d. to £3. No losses were sustained, and a small net profit was made upon the year's working.

NOTICE.

Communications respecting the contents of the GAZETTE should be addressed to:—

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