

1926.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(REPORT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT.

The SECRETARY, Department of Labour, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 21st June, 1926.

I have the honour to present herewith the thirty-fifth annual report of this Department, for the information of His Excellency the Governor-General, and to be laid before Parliament, in compliance with the Labour Department Act, 1908, and the Factories Act, 1921-22. The report covers the financial year 1st April, 1925, to 31st March, 1926.

I have, &c.,

F. W. ROWLEY,

The Hon. the Minister of Labour.

Secretary of Labour.

CONDITIONS OF TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT.

THE number of applications at the Department's bureaux throughout the Dominion varied from 363 at the beginning of the year (1st April, 1925), rising to 792 in July, and falling again to 547 at the 31st March, 1926. The number as at 14th June, 1926, is 2,169. As is usual, unskilled labourers comprised a little more than one-half of the total throughout the year, and the present number of such men is 1,276. The remainder comprise (1) clerks, 68; (2) shop-assistants, 39; (3) storemen and packers, 45; (4) drivers, 104; (5) hotel workers, 101; (6) seamen and firemen, 46; (7) farm hands, 92; (8) engineers, 57; and others in miscellaneous occupations in small numbers. The only skilled trade in which there has been any degree of unemployment was again engineering, which has on account of the competition with importations been slack for several years. The figures for the past seasons cannot be taken as a true indication of the actual extent of unemployment, as in many cases unemployed workers did not apply to the Department unless there was a likelihood of work being found through its bureaux. During the present winter, however, the figures give a more accurate statement of the position. A considerable amount of employment has been provided by the Government, local bodies, and private employers, and the applicants have in most places been required to present themselves through one channel—at the Department's bureaux.

The increase in unemployment over last year is no doubt largely due to the fall in exports, the value of which was £6,073,571 less than in the preceding year, while imports increased by £3,204,761 over the 1924-25 period, resulting in an excess of imports over exports of £4,328,269 (against an excess of exports over imports during 1924-25 of £4,950,063). It is stated that the principal causes