

Figures showing the numbers on the Unemployment Register each week from April, 1921, to July, 1929, are given in the attached Table I, and in order to more readily follow the movement and compare the extent of unemployment at corresponding periods each year the figures by calendar years have also been plotted on Graph A.

Figures showing the number of men on public works (including special relief works) under control of the Public Works Department are available for each week from April, 1921, to March, 1929—practically the same period as covered in Table I for unemployed registrations. Although these do not include workers employed on relief works under control of the Forestry Department and local authorities, they are instructive in connection with the present study. The figures are given in Table II and illustrated on Graph B.

The weekly average on the unemployed register each year (Table I) is informative as to the growth of the problem, and also when compared with the numbers on public works (Table II). The figures are as follows:—

Year.	Weekly Average on Unemployed Register.	Weekly Average on Public Works.
1921 (9 months)	1,097	4,878
1922	1,237	5,878
1923	599	5,827
1924	437	6,494
1925	426	7,689
1926	1,196	9,675
1927	1,982	11,033
1928	2,504	11,622
1929	2,975 (to July)	13,819 (to March).

It will be seen that the position, after recovering somewhat from the 1920–21 slump, became suddenly and rapidly worse during 1926. From that point in 1926 the numbers on the Unemployed Register have increased with fluctuations each year, despite the greater numbers absorbed on public works. In February, 1928, registration could be effected at any post-office throughout the Dominion, and the greater facilities so afforded may have been a factor in the increased registrations thereafter as compared with previous years. In a comparative study of the two graphs, A and B (when the difference in scale employed should be noted), one is immediately struck by the outstanding fact that the rapid growth of the unemployed registrations in 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929 is coincident with and accompanied by a much larger and similarly rapid growth in the numbers engaged on public works. In 1929, with a record number employed on public works, the unemployed registrations have reached the highest points yet attained.

Another factor which is immediately evident from either or both Graphs A and B is that the unemployment problem is greatly affected by seasonal fluctuations. The Committee are elsewhere dealing specially with this aspect of the problem, and making certain suggestions for mitigating the unemployment arising therefrom. Here the Committee merely desire to present some facts as to the extent and incidence of seasonal fluctuations in employment in New Zealand.

Seasonal fluctuations are best studied from the side of employment. For each of the years 1926 and 1927 statistics as to the numbers engaged each month in the factory and building industries of the Dominion have been tabulated by the Census and Statistics Office; these are given in Tables III, IV, V, and VI, while an explanatory note (Paper VII) sets out the scope of the data, the treatment of the figures, and a list of the industries covered. The statistics are illustrated by Graphs C and D.

Graph C shows a definitely rhythmical movement in employment in the manufacturing and building industries. A recession sets in about March, reaches its nadir somewhere about July, then gives way to a period of increased activity which swings fairly evenly up to its zenith in February, and is in its turn followed by another ebb. Employment in the Public Works Department, so far as it can be judged from the figures for the two years 1926 and 1927, shows a movement which corresponds inversely to that for the manufacturing and building industries. It swings downwards in the summer months and upwards in the winter. The level of employment in the Public Works Department was much higher in 1927 than in 1926. The combination of these two curves shows that employment on the public works does not affect to any great extent the oscillations in employment in the two other industries.

Graph D shows the course of employment in the semi-primary industries, the other manufacturing industries, and the building industry. Its outstanding features are (a) the wide swing from the period of activity in the summer months to the slack period in the winter months, for the semi-primary industries, and (b) the relative smoothness of the curve for the other manufacturing industries.

The Committee next considered the composition of the unemployed in order to obtain some understanding of the nature and extent of the unemployment prevailing. An analysis of those on the Unemployed Registers has been compiled monthly by the Census and Statistics Office since June, 1928. Tables VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII give an analysis of the numbers on the Unemployed Registers for the latest date available—8th July, 1929—at time of writing. These tables are informative, and may be very briefly summarized here.

There were in all 3,896 men on the Unemployment Registers of the Labour Department on the 8th July, 1929. Of this number 2,454, or 63 per cent. of the total, were classified as labourers. Other occupations in which the number exceeded fifty in numerical order are: Farm hands, 173; drivers, 157; carpenters and joiners, 119; hotel workers and cooks, 94; clerical workers, 66; painters and glaziers, 59; storemen and packers, 58; and gardeners, 51.

There were 1,709 single and 2,104 married men on the registers, and 83 unspecified. Of this total, 1,466 men had no dependants; 558, one dependant; 637, two; 511, three; 326, four; and 315, five