

The increases shown in 1925 and 1926 are, of course, accounted for by the general "slump"; the number of men on Public Works also increased considerably at that time, and has continued to do so. The number of men on relief works in July was 3,922, which if added to the above number of applicants makes a total of 7,818.

In previous years about one-half of the applicants at the bureaux have been unskilled workers; the proportion increased during 1927-28 to two-thirds, and that proportion has been maintained to the present time, the remainder being distributed amongst farm hands, drivers, hotel workers and cooks, carpenters and joiners, clerical workers, engineers, gardeners, painters and glaziers, storemen and packers, seamen and firemen, shop-assistants and salesmen, and miscellaneous.

A noticeable feature of the unemployment is the large turnover that has taken place: for example, of the 3,896 applicants on the 8th July approximately 1,518 (40 per cent. of the applicants) have applied for the first time during the previous three weeks.

Another feature worthy of notice is that, while at the end of January last some 47 per cent. of the applicants throughout the Dominion had, according to their applications, lost over three months during the preceding twelve months, the percentage in April had increased to about 77. This is probably due to the fact that at the time of the earlier return the usual large numbers of men were being employed in the various seasonal occupations, while in April most of these works had finished and the men had then made their applications at the bureaux.

Regarding the building trades, the following figures, issued by the Government Statistician, show the total value of all building operations during the last eight years; these indicate that work in this trade has fallen off during the past two years:—

	£		£
1921-22	5,283,012	1925-26.. .. .	10,169,530
1922-23	7,101,681	1926-27.. .. .	11,019,389
1923-24	9,146,479	1927-28.. .. .	9,665,216
1924-25	9,304,160	1928-29.. .. .	9,054,421

The peak year was reached in 1926-27; since then the value of the permits decreased by over £1,300,000 in 1927-28, owing principally to fewer private dwellings being erected, and by a further £610,000 in 1928-29, in which year business premises showed a decrease of £775,000 and private dwellings a decrease of £229,000, while other buildings and additions and alterations showed an increase of £394,000.

Of other industries, engineering, sawmilling, electrical working, boot-manufacturing, saddlery, and gum-digging, also meat-freezing in some districts, have been slack. As a result of inquiries made in the different districts of the Dominion the following are some of the reasons for the present state of these occupations: Engineering—The increasing use of electricity, for which motors, &c., are imported, has had the effect of slowing-up the trade. Electrical trade—Owing to the completion of the bulk of reticulation work, the men employed on wiring are experiencing difficulty in keeping in employment. Saddlery—The trade continues to recede in importance with the increase in motor traction. Boot-manufacturing—Importations and prejudice against the local article; those connected with the industry are optimistic, however, that the Footwear Committee's deliberations will have a beneficial effect upon the trade. Gum-digging—It is estimated that some 700 men have been compelled to leave the diggings in the far North on account of the discovery of a cheap substitute. Sawmilling—Due to importations: the West Coast and the Hamilton districts report a gradual improvement, whilst Wanganui reports that nine mills have closed on account of the cutting-out of the bush, and that no new ones have been opened. Meat-freezing—A quiet season has been experienced in several districts, where the amount of stock handled was less than that of last year.

The comparison of unemployment in New Zealand with that of other countries given last year has been brought up to date, and still shows that unemployment is much greater elsewhere than in the Dominion.

In Great Britain and Northern Ireland the total number of persons (insured and uninsured) registered at employment exchanges on the 27th May, 1929, was approximately 1,165,000, of whom 909,000 were men; the latter figure represents 1 in 50 of the population. As stated last year, a Government Committee reporting in 1925 on the British unemployment insurance scheme has estimated that the scheme should anticipate an average of 700,000 unemployed persons (equivalent to about 1 in 60 of the total population).

In the United States in 1928 the estimate of the number of unemployed (men and women) varied between two and eight million, but the most reliable figure was approximately four million, or 1 in 28 of the population. (An official publication states that the number "has never been known" and urges the need for the information.)

In Australia the estimates from the several States vary, but they appear to indicate that about 32,000, or 1 in 190 of the population, were unemployed in March, 1928.

In New Zealand the Department's applicants on the 8th July, 1929, were 3,896, equivalent to 1 in 373 of the population.

The Unemployment Committee that was appointed by the Government on the recommendation of the Industrial Conference last year is now engaged in prosecuting its inquiries, and reports on the investigations that have recently been made into the same question in other countries of the world have been submitted to it for consideration.