

REPORT.

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

SIR,—

Department of Labour, Wellington, 15th June, 1915.

I have the honour to present herewith the twenty-fourth annual report of this Department for the information of His Excellency the Governor, and to be laid before Parliament in compliance with the Labour Department and Labour Day Act, 1908, and the Factories Act, 1908. The report covers the late financial year—viz., from the 1st April, 1914, to the 31st March, 1915.

I have, &c.,

F. W. ROWLEY,

Secretary of Labour.

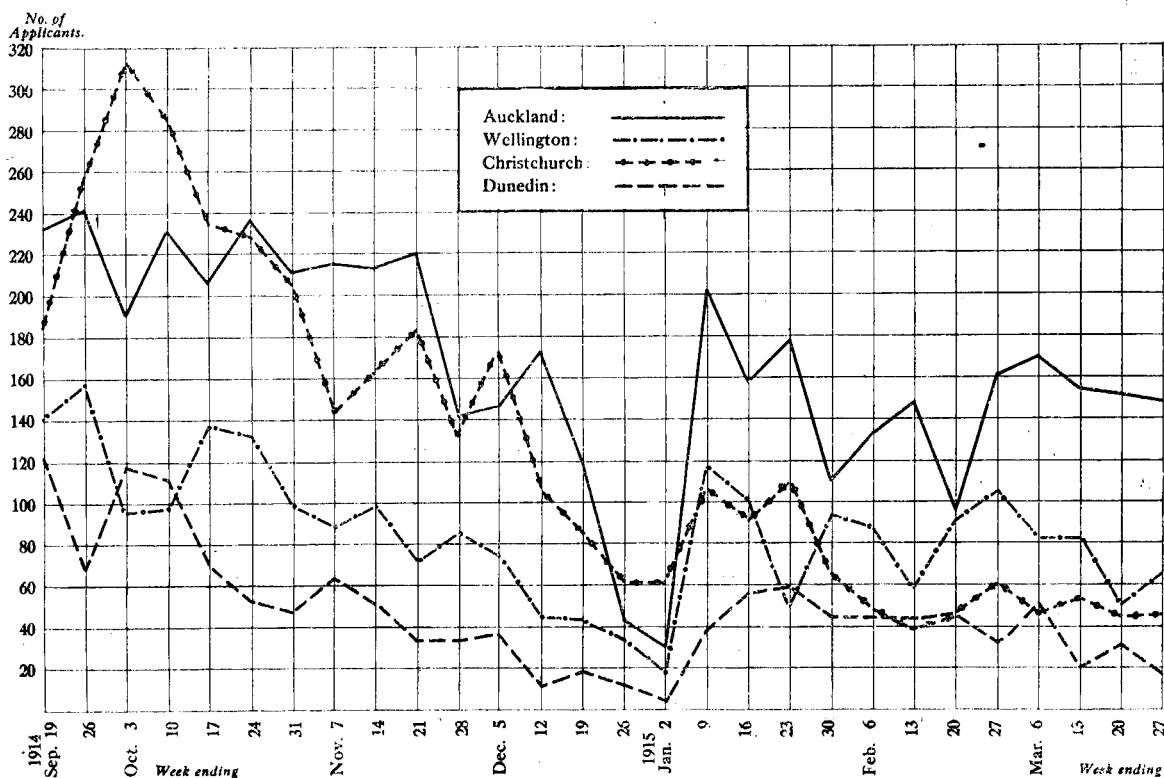
The Right Hon. the Minister of Labour.

CONDITIONS OF TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT.

It will be remembered that the industrial unrest at the end of the year 1913 was followed by considerable unemployment, and an adjustment to normal conditions took some time to eventuate. In April, the opening month of the past financial year, the conditions of trade and employment appeared to be settled, and, generally speaking, a feeling of optimism prevailed among business people as to the future. In May, however, owing to unusually wet and cold weather, outdoor work became greatly retarded, and a decided increase in the number of unemployed in the centres was met by providing work on Government roads and railways.

When the war broke out, in August, it was the general opinion that the effect would be immediately disastrous to industries and employment throughout the Dominion. The panic which followed lasted until towards the end of October, when, with the advance of spring, a rapid recovery was made towards normality.

The following chart shows the number of applications made for employment to the Department's employment bureaux in the four chief centres from September, 1914, to March, 1915, and indicates the extent of unemployment during that period. It will be noted that with the coming of spring and summer the position materially improved.



During the winter and the first few months of the war the Department co-operated with the municipalities in most of the chief and secondary towns in an endeavour to provide employment for local workers. Representative committees were set up, which did very useful work in