

RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

PERIOD MAY, 1926, to 24TH NOVEMBER, 1928.

Introductory.

The present series of relief works was commenced in the latter end of May, 1926, with 74 men engaged during the week ended 29th May, and the numbers increased rapidly until there were 1,207 men employed on 20th November of that year. Men then left to return to seasonal occupations, and there were only 381 men on relief works in the middle of February, 1927.

The registrations with the Labour Bureaux showed a decided increase about that time, and instructions were issued for further relief works to be started, and the number of men employed on relief works rose rapidly to 2,626 early in September, 1927. There was a gradual diminution from that date until the middle of February, 1928, when the returns showed that there were 1,435 men on relief works.

As in the previous year, registrations at Labour Bureaux increased in February, 1928, and instructions were issued for further relief works to be started, with the result that there were 2,055 men engaged on Government relief works at 31st March last, and 4,451 at 1st September, 1928. Forestry Department's works have now closed down for the season, and the number of men on relief works has decreased to 3,363.

The Forestry Department employed a fair number of relief workers during the 1927 tree-planting season. This year, however, it has rendered greater assistance, and the average weekly number of men employed by it as relief workers from early in May to 30th September was 689. The Lands Department has also employed a few men on relief works during the last five months, the weekly average being 35.

With these exceptions all relief workers who have been provided with Government employment have been placed on works under the control of the Public Works Department, and have been employed principally on road-construction, including main highways. It should be noted, however, that other large employing Departments—*i.e.*, Railway and Post and Telegraph—have also assisted by finding work for some of their own temporary employees, who might have been paid off in ordinary circumstances.

Employment of Men on Relief Works.

During the period 24th May, 1926, to 24th November, 1928, 15,623 men were sent to Government relief works, and 8,266 left of their own accord ; the figures for the different years being as follows :—

Sent to relief works :—

24th May, 1926, to 31st March, 1927	2,400
1st April, 1927, to 31st March, 1928	6,200
1st April, 1928, to 24th November, 1928	7,023
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	15,623

Left relief works of their own accord :—

24th April, 1926, to 31st March, 1927	1,100
1st April, 1927, to 31st March, 1928	3,000
1st April, 1928, to 24th November, 1928	4,166
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	8,266

The average weekly number of men employed on relief works each year from 24th May, 1926, to 24th November, 1928, was as follows :—

24th May, 1926, to 31st March, 1927	758
1st April, 1927, to 31st March, 1928	1,908
1st April, 1928, to 24th November, 1928	3,341

The peak was reached on 1st September, 1928, when there were 4,451 men on Government relief works. There has been a reduction each week since then owing to forestry works closing down, and the number employed on 24th November, 1928, was 3,363.