

Although the 1930 (March year) figures in the above table do not show the full effects of the 1930 slump in prices, nevertheless a decline in the volume of employment is recorded in many industries. In the sawmilling industry a downward tendency in employment has been recorded during the five years under review, the number of employees in 1930 (7,381) being 2,262 below the 1926 figures (9,643)—a decrease of 23·46 per cent.

The number of employees engaged in the gasmaking industry has steadily declined each year since 1926. The substitution of electricity for gas is no doubt the main cause contributing to this decrease; employment in the electric generating and supply industry having increased from 1,985 in 1926 to 2,459 in 1930.

Electric-tramway employees numbered 2,936 in 1930, as compared with 3,310 in 1926. Employment in this industry has also decreased year by year since 1926. A similar position is recorded in the brick, tile, and pottery making industry, which had 1,392 employees in 1926, and 1,156 in 1930. The boot and shoe industry also had fewer employees in 1930 than in 1926.

Employment in the engineering trades increased considerably in the years immediately prior to 1930, particularly in the motor-engineering industry, which employed 5,511 persons in 1930, an increase of 1,962, or 55 per cent., since 1926. This industry was, however, affected very adversely by the slump in 1930, imports of motor-vehicles having fallen from £4,278,924 in the calendar year 1929 to £2,448,781 in 1930.

Employment in flax-milling is on a definitely lower level than in previous years, the number of employees in 1930 (903) being 338 less than in 1926, a decline of 27 per cent.

### Building Activity.

The value of building permits issued by cities, boroughs, and town districts during the last ten years is shown below as an indication of the movement in building activities during that period :—

Year.	Number of New Buildings.	Value of New Buildings.	Value of Alterations to Existing Buildings.	Total Value of all Permits
		£	£	£
1921-22 .. ..	5,015	4,602,834	680,178	5,283,012
1922-23 .. ..	6,563	6,124,439	977,242	7,101,681
1923-24 .. ..	7,804	7,708,933	1,437,546	9,146,479
1924-25 .. ..	6,907	7,823,331	1,480,829	9,304,160
1925-26 .. ..	7,917	8,613,549	1,555,981	10,169,530
1926-27 .. ..	8,354	9,357,977	1,661,412	11,019,389
1927-28 .. ..	6,914	8,127,732	1,537,484	9,665,216
1928-29 .. ..	6,199	7,326,464	1,727,957	9,054,421
1929-30 .. ..	6,705	7,917,349	2,042,528	9,959,877
1930-31 .. ..	4,111	4,240,238	1,233,157	5,473,395

The value of building permits issued by cities, boroughs, and town districts during the year ended 31st March, 1931, was £5,473,395, a decrease of £4,486,472 as compared with the 1929-30 figure. During the previous seven years the value of building permits issued varied between £9,054,421 (in 1928-29) and £11,019,389 (1926-27). The sudden falling-off of such great magnitude in building activity has had far-reaching effects on the unemployment situation generally. Apart from the resultant unemployment in the building trades and in industries supplying building-materials, serious repercussions in other industries are caused by the diminished purchasing-power of those directly affected by the slump in building activity. The falling-off in the building trade was particularly marked in the later months of 1930 and early in 1931, as is illustrated in the following table, which shows the actual value of building permits issued in the larger towns during each month of 1930 and the early months of 1931 :—

### VALUE OF BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED IN LARGER TOWNS.

Month.	New Buildings.	Alterations to Existing Buildings.	Total.
	£	£	£
1930.			
January .. ..	546,133	119,823	665,956
February .. ..	404,105	148,189	552,294
March .. ..	667,090	159,893	826,983
April .. ..	301,275	102,831	404,106
May .. ..	406,980	133,316	540,296
June .. ..	352,460	164,492	516,952
July .. ..	451,838	113,248	565,086
August .. ..	335,546	85,152	420,698
September .. ..	331,160	103,863	435,023
October .. ..	407,348	87,638	494,986
November .. ..	235,320	81,065	316,385
December .. ..	176,702	80,448	257,150
1931.			
January .. ..	174,321	55,285	229,606
February .. ..	234,814	65,327	300,141
March .. ..	196,686	60,411	257,097