



# The Impact of War on Long-Term Unemployment in Great Britain

## Appendix: The Work of the Review Panels

A report on the impact of war on long-term unemployment in Great Britain was published in a recent issue of the *Review*.<sup>1</sup> The present appendix to the report is based on material provided by the Ministry of Labour and National Service. Its purpose is to give additional details on the work of the panels set up to review the cases of wholly unemployed men and women.

### SPECIAL PANELS

#### *Merchant Seamen*

Early in 1940, the shortage of merchant seamen was acute despite the fact that there were still considerable numbers of seamen, deck hands, and other ratings on the registers of the employment exchanges. It was suggested by representatives of the industry that the explanation lay in the fact that many men were registered and drawing benefit as seamen who were no longer able or were unwilling to take work in occupations of the type in which they were classified. Another factor was that the published figures included some seamen who were awaiting the turn round of their ships or were studying for examinations. In any case, it was decided to make a special review of all men registered as seamen in order (a) to ascertain whether these men were suitable for sea-going employment and were properly classified, and (b) to provide additional information on the unemployed seamen.

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<sup>1</sup> *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLV, No. 1, Jan. 1942, pp. 44-63.

Arrangements were made at the port employment exchanges for interviewing all seamen other than those known to be going to sea in the near future. The interviews were held at the joint supply offices, which were the chief placement agencies.<sup>1</sup> Special panels were asked to advise the employment exchanges as to the suitability of the men for seagoing employment. Their work was done in collaboration with vacancy officials of the Ministry of Labour. In the light of the panel's advice on each individual case, the manager of the employment exchange decided whether the man should be reclassified for some other occupation or what type of seagoing employment he might take up.

The interviewing had been nearly completed by the end of May 1940. Reports showed that, up to 6 June 1940, 3,991 men were interviewed, of whom as many as 3,487 were considered suitable for seagoing employment. Of the remainder, over 400 were reclassified for other work, and in nearly 100 cases there was some difficulty or objection to reclassification.

At present, the number of ex-merchant seamen who are unemployed is negligible. After the issue of the Essential Work (Merchant Navy) Order, 1941, merchant seamen who had been at sea at any time since 1 January 1936 were required to register with an employment exchange, and a Merchant Navy Reserve Pool was formed. The Pool makes possible a regular flow of seamen of all categories who are available for employment at sea as and when required. Pending appointment to the Reserve Pool or to a particular ship, these men remain in their shore employment.

### *Agricultural Workers*

In July 1940 a special review was made of all applicants, unemployed for one month or more, who had registered for work in agricultural occupations or for work in agriculture as an alternative occupation. The review panels consisted of representatives of employers and workers, with chairmen nominated by agricultural executive committees. The interviews were held at different centres throughout the country.

Of the total number of 1,022 agricultural workers who were interviewed, 249 were graded as suitable for skilled work, 327 as suitable for unskilled work (some after a period of reconditioning), and 446 as no longer suitable for employment in agriculture. Of the 503 persons with agriculture as an alternative occupation, 103 were found suitable for skilled work, 172 for unskilled work, and 223 not suitable for any form of agricultural employment.

Although these panels are still available for interviewing agricultural workers, there is no longer much need for them owing to the quick absorption into agriculture of workers who are suitable for such employment. The relatively small numbers of agricultural workers now on the registers experience only short periods of unemployment.

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<sup>1</sup> Seamen registered at other than port employment exchanges could not be interviewed easily by the panels, but their cases were reviewed by the joint supply offices, where necessary.

*Engineering Workers*

In September 1940 a panel was set up in each employment exchange area, consisting of employers and workers from the engineering industry, to review the cases of all men idle for one month or more whose position had not been reviewed. Local secretaries of the organisations of workers and employers concerned were invited to nominate representatives to serve on the panels.

The classes of men brought under review were:

- (1) Men classified under skilled engineering occupations;
- (2) Men classified under other engineering occupations and not interviewed by a general panel;
- (3) Men recommended by a general panel for review by an engineering panel.

The panels were asked to decide whether a man was suitable for immediate employment in engineering, whether he would be suitable if given a short period of retraining, or whether he would never be suitable for work in the industry. No information concerning the results of the enquiries of these panels is available, owing to enemy action.

The panels do not function at present because the number of unemployed engineering workers is negligible.

*Coal Miners*

In June 1941 panels were set up in each coal mining district of Great Britain to interview all wholly unemployed men registered for coal mining and all wholly unemployed men registered for other occupations but whose unemployment books indicated previous employment in coal mining. A substantial number of the miners and ex-miners unemployed at that time returned to the mines without having to be interviewed.

The number of miners interviewed and the findings of the panels, up to 6 October 1941, are indicated below. A further 1,087 have been selected for interview but the findings are not yet available.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>
Suitable for employment in coal mining below ground	107
Suitable for employment in coal mining (a) above ground and (b) land drainage	402
	110
Not suitable for any kind of coal mining or for land drainage	871
Not suitable for any work	<u>412</u>
Total coal miners interviewed by October 1941	1902

## GENERAL REVIEW PANELS

In July 1940, the review procedure was extended to all wholly unemployed men on the registers for one month or more, and subsequently, to all unemployed men with an aggregate of less than four weeks' employment in the preceding four months. In February 1941, the procedure was extended to unemployed women on the registers for one month or more.

With the reduction in unemployment, the number of persons interviewed dropped to a low level. For example, in August 1940, 75,408 men were interviewed, while in August 1941 only 4,359 were interviewed.

The following table indicates the results of the interviews of men registrants:

Men interviewed and panel recommendations	June to Dec. 1940	Jan. to Aug. 1941
Number of men interviewed by panel	185,853	96,347
Number of men reviewed by panel and considered to be:		
Suitable for review by industry panel	5,518	1,569
"      " immediate employment	141,437	50,939
"      " some form of full-time work in civil defence or other national service	19,666	6,965
Suitable for training in engineering:		
(a) Willing to accept training	14,300	4,269
(b) Unwilling but with good reason for unwillingness	6,414	1,245
(c) Unwilling and without good reason for unwillingness	2,687	765
Willing to take work in other districts if lodging and travelling allowances are payable	78,778	9,158
Unwilling to take work in other districts but with good reason for unwillingness	63,429	3,602
Unwilling to take work in other districts and without good reason for unwillingness	7,301	1,327
Likely to become suitable for employment after a period of trial employment or reconditioning	3,660	2,049
Unsuitable for ordinary industrial employment by reason of age, physical or mental disability, or other causes	46,342	41,771

The following table indicates the results of the interviews of unemployed women registrants:

Women interviewed and panel recommendations	Feb.-Aug. 1941
Number of women interviewed by panel	75,344
Number suitable for factory or workshop employment	37,028
"        "        " general clerical        "	5,260
"        "        " resident domestic        "	4,165
"        "        " other full-time        "	19,940
Number unsuitable for normal full-time employment	9,187
Number suitable for full-time employment who are:	
Available for full-time employment	44,907
Available only for part-time employment	991
Number available for full-time employment (44,907) who are:	
Willing to take work involving living away from home	6,795
Available only for work within daily travelling distance or in immediate neighbourhood of home, for whom work is likely to be available within three months	25,207
Available only for work within daily travelling distance or in immediate neighbourhood of home for whom work is not likely to be available within three months, and	
(a) who have good reason for refusing to go away to work	9,317
(b) who do not have good reason for refusing to go away to work	3,588
Number suitable for training under the Ministry's schemes and willing to accept such training away from home	2,320
Number suitable for training, but willing to accept training in home area only	14,894