

B. SEMI-PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

(1) THE PERIOD FROM 1901 TO 1931

Dealing first with the period between 1901 and 1931, the following table classifies the various semi-primary industries as between those that are stable, expanding, and contracting :—

Table No. 96.—Table showing Number of Employees engaged in Semi-primary Industries 1900-01, 1920-21, and 1930-31

	1900-01.	1920-21.	1930-31.
(1) STABLE INDUSTRIES Nil.			
(2) EXPANDING INDUSTRIES			
Animal food—			
Meat freezing and preserving works	2,221	8,328	5,891
Ham and bacon curing	196	188	380
Butter, cheese, and condensed-milk manufacture	1,221	3,089	4,184
Vegetable food—			
Grain-milling	515	530	692
Vegetable produce for fodder—			
Grain-crushing	Not shown	45	87
(3) CONTRACTING INDUSTRIES			
Animal food—			
Fish curing and preserving	137	72	63
Harness, saddlery, and leatherware—			
Tanning, fellmongery, and woolscouring	1,963	1,069	Tanning, 439; fellmongery and woolscouring, 310
Working in wood—			
Sawmilling, sash and door making	6,812	8,385	6,390
Fibrous materials—			
Flaxmilling (phormium)	1,698	815	177

The term “stable” means that over the period under review the number of employees has remained relatively constant. The term “expanding” means that there has been some increase during the period in the number of employees, while the term “contracting” means that the number of employees has tended to fall.

During the period under review none of the semi-primary industries can be classified as stable. The outstanding case of expanding industries was the meat freezing and preserving works, which reflects the expansion in the sheep-grazing industry during the period, and particularly the development of fat-lamb production. The figure for 1920-21 was abnormally high. The quantity of frozen meat exported about that period was much higher than for more than a decade subsequently, and this is reflected in the number of operatives. As between 1924 and 1931 the average number of operatives per annum was 6,363; in fact, in 1927 there were only 5,428 employees. It can thus be seen that, although the above table shows a major fall in the employees in this industry as between 1921 and 1931, the real decline was very much less than would appear. During the “twenties” an average of about 8 per cent. of all employees in secondary industries was engaged in the meat freezing and preserving trade.