

The following table shows the most important industries ranged in order of the amount of wages paid during 1907-8, compared with wages totals for 1906-7. As will be noticed, the total increase in wages of £487,982 is contributed to by almost every trade in operation. In most industries the increase is very substantial, whilst in all the others shown the figures indicate a very satisfactory progress.

Class.	Wages paid during the Years		Increase.	Increase Percentage.
	1907-8.	1906-7.		
	£	£	£	
Food trades	1,015,700	906,163	109,537	12.1
Woodworking trades	935,336	853,021	82,315	9.6
Iron and metal trades	896,057	828,425	67,632	8.2
Clothing trades	781,372	698,614	82,758	11.8
Printing and stationery trades	325,746	315,904	9,842	3.1
Leather-working trades	303,253	294,454	8,799	3.0
Flax and fibre trades	199,189	151,313	47,876	31.6
Stone, clay, and mineral trades	187,532	170,741	16,791	9.8
Fellmongering trades	136,526	133,564	2,962	2.2
Light, heat, and power trades	123,016	110,222	12,794	11.6
Chemical and by-product trades	65,522	64,616	906	1.4
Ship building and repairing trades	61,727	56,061	5,666	10.0
Watch and jewellery trades	42,892	39,679	3,213	8.3
Paper and cardboard trades	16,164	14,360	1,804	12.5
Basket and wicker trade trades	15,879	13,822	2,057	14.9
Miscellaneous trades not included above	213,108	180,078	33,030	18.3
Totals	5,319,019	4,831,037	487,982	10.1

NOTE.—The percentage of increase shown above does not imply that there was increase in the rate of wage paid to the individual worker, but only that (generally to the greater number of workers) an increased percentage on the total amount of wages was disbursed.

The large increase of 31.6 per cent. in wages paid in the flax-milling trade is no doubt due to the high price obtained for hemp during part of the period under review, combined with the opportunities for constant working afforded by the generally good weather-conditions. The recent drop in the price of fibre will probably have the effect of considerably reducing the number of mills to be registered during the coming year. In the food trades steady progress in meat-freezing, bread, biscuit, and confectionery making, and in the milk-products industries is shown by the increase in wages paid of 12.1 per cent. It is also worthy of note that the further introductions of gasworks and electrical works for generation and distribution of power, light, and heating have been the means of an increase in wages paid of £12,794, or 11.6 per cent. Most of the other trades show a healthy increase of about the average percentage (10.1), which the total increase for the Dominion of £487,982 represents. A diagram illustrating the relative importance of each industry by total wages paid forms part of the appendix to this report.

OVERTIME WORKED IN FACTORIES.

In each of the chief centres of population there has been a grave increase in the hours of overtime worked. In no annual period previously recorded has the sum of such overtime reached the limit of this year's excess over working-hours. In the Cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin 733,018 hours have thus been added to the normal time of employment. Some of the increases will be noted as almost phenomenal; for instance, the men in Dunedin, who the previous year worked 107,565 hours of overtime, have during this last year nearly doubled that amount in their record of 194,804 hours.

It is difficult to understand the main cause of this increase unless we grant that there must have been a very great acceleration and accumulation of business, combined with a shortage of workers.

Overtime-work, especially for women, is an almost unmixed evil as regards the workers themselves, even when tempered by consideration of the extra wages earned, but such operations certainly show a state of industrial prosperity hitherto unprecedented.