

PRESENT CONDITIONS OF LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

The local manufacturing industries have suffered during the post-war depression, but it is hardly correct to say that the industries generally are having an adverse period. In some branches of production, notably the leather industries, the depression has been serious, and unemployment has been present on a considerable scale. Much of this difficulty has been caused by the severity of overseas competition, particularly competition from Australia.

The cement industry is also experiencing a trying time, and the various works are finding it difficult to carry on at a profit. The demand for cement and building-materials generally has slackened during the recent financial stringency, and as a result the people engaged in the production of these materials cannot find a ready market for their whole output.

PROSPECTIVE INDUSTRIES.

There are several new and prospective industries engaging the attention of the Department. An industry recently established in Wellington is the manufacture of rubber products at Miramar. The promoters of this venture have, so far, utilized mainly second-hand rubber goods and worked them up, but they have the machinery to deal with the plantation rubber, and expect to be able to develop a big output in tires and other rubber goods.

Not long ago there was considerable interest in the proposal to establish the beet-sugar industry in New Zealand. At the time the proposal was first considered the prices of sugar were high and still moving upward, but within more recent months the sugar-market has shown an easing tendency, and there is not now the same need for supplementary supplies. Although the world's production has not yet returned to a level equal to the normal requirements of all countries, there is every prospect that more than sufficient supplies will be available in the near future.

Inquiries into the proposal to establish the beet-sugar industry in this Dominion revealed the fact that beet of good sugar-producing qualities could be grown in many parts of the country, but it appeared that the establishment of the works sufficient to supply about one-tenth of New Zealand's requirements would involve the capital outlay of nearly half a million.

A new product called "meat-flour" has also been investigated by the Department. It appears to be of high food value, and its manufacture should form an important supplement to the meat freezing and preserving industries; and there is a prospect of building up an export trade, especially with countries not exploited by the fresh- and frozen-meat trade.

Helpful information for the guidance of some New-Zealanders interested in the local manufacture of bricks and tiles (for roofing and flooring) has been obtained by the Department through the High Commissioner's Office, which has been in touch with English experts. A sufficient quantity of North Island clay was sent to an English firm to enable it to make reliable tests, and the result is a report, accompanied by samples of bricks and tiles, showing that the material is suitable for roofing and flooring tiles as well as for bricks. The report includes details of the cost of plant for the making of bricks and tiles. Altogether the information is comprehensive enough to enable the persons interested to estimate the approximate cost of manufacture on a commercial scale. Several inquiries have been received for information on this matter.

The tile-making industry has made good headway, and local producers are now turning out very satisfactory goods rivalling the famous Marseilles tiles.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion the Department of Industries and Commerce desires to stress the importance to the Dominion of the need for greater encouragement being given to the working and utilization of her raw materials. The changed conditions of trade and commerce which the war has brought have made it necessary for all countries in the Empire to look to the development of their own resources as an aid to the restoration of national prosperity. In New Zealand there is a wide field for effort in the bringing in and utilization of raw materials, and the enterprise in this direction of a number of local manufacturers is serving a double and commendable purpose; it is restoring industry and production and at the same time providing work for many workers who probably in this period of depression would otherwise be unemployed. The machinery of the Board of Trade Act, 1919, should help to facilitate the formation of a broader basis of support for the increasing population of this country and in no small measure tend to hasten the recovery of the farming and allied industries,

For the Department of Industries and Commerce.

W. G. McDONALD, Chairman, Board of Trade.

G. WILSON, } Members, Board of Trade.
P. HALLY, }

9th August, 1921.

J. W. COLLINS, Secretary of Industries and Commerce.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (700 copies), £78.

By Authority: MARCUS F. MARKS, Government Printer, Wellington.—1921.

Price 9d.]