

Of the total employees engaged in all industries, 2,808, or 3·8 per cent., were classified as administrative; 64,658, or 87·8 per cent., as productive; while 6,196, or 8·4 per cent., were classified as distributive. The following table shows the average yearly wages paid per productive employee for the last five years:—

					Males. £	Females. £	Both Sexes. £
1915-16	..	..	..	..	133·5	56·7	115·1
1919-20	..	..	..	..	176·5	79·9	154·3
1920-21	..	..	..	..	203·8	94·6	178·9
1921-22	..	..	..	..	208·4	93·7	187·2
1922-23	..	..	..	..	199·8	91·1	178·6

That many of our industries are not fully manned is clearly indicated by statistics relating to overtime. During the year ended 31st March, 1923, no less than 1,799,233 hours' overtime were worked in all industries furnishing returns, the efforts of male workers accounting for 1,676,902 hours, against 122,331 hours for females. If overtime were distributed evenly among all employees in industries each male employee would work 31·8 hours, and each female worker 10·1 hours overtime per year.

It will be noted that the value of materials used is greater by £5,501,362 than it was during 1922, whilst the value of goods manufactured shows an increase of £6,707,154 for the same period. The total value of products for the period, £73,853,423, includes meat freezing and preserving, £12,677,331, and butter, cheese, and condensed-milk manufactures, £19,181,624, a total of £31,858,955; leaving a total of £41,994,468 for the remaining secondary industries, which is £382,000 in excess of the value of the output for the previous year.

During the twelve months under review very few new industries commenced operations, although some promising industries on a smaller scale have been established. A new woollen-mill on a large scale is nearing completion at Wanganui, and mills on a smaller scale will probably be erected at Masterton and at Gore. There have been large additions made to existing factories, and several new factories and workrooms have been erected. In Wellington two large establishments for the manufacture of matches and boots have been completed. These buildings embody all the latest improvements in lighting and sanitation.

The following brief notes in regard to the state of trade of several of the leading industries of the Dominion for the year 1923-24 are placed on record:—

Engineering.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£437,036	£1,459,923

The trade continues to be somewhat depressed, although jobbing-work is active. The competition of both English and American manufacturers is severely felt.

Agricultural, Dairy Machinery, and Implement-making.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£199,741	£483,966

Trade was poor to the end of the year 1923, but lately an improvement has been experienced.

Furniture and Cabinetmaking.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£328,185	£1,003,770

Trading conditions continue to be active, and, although competition is particularly keen, the industry is busy and progressive. The manufacture of gramophones is growing rapidly, and their quality, price, and appearance compare most favourably with importations.

Factory Clothing and Waterproof making.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£423,144	£2,409,377

This industry has suffered a year of depression, but it is pleasing to record that prospects for the coming spring are brighter.

Biscuits and Confectionery.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£364,111	£1,230,363

Although overseas competition has been severely felt, the local manufacturers report that trade has been fair. The quality of both biscuits and confectionery manufactured locally is in every respect equal to similar imported lines, and, as special attention is now being paid by manufacturers to the artistic packing of their confections, it is confidently expected that the sales of the local product will improve greatly.

Soap and Candle Making.

					1906.	1923.
Value of output	..	..	..	..	£178,556	£552,228

Fair business has been done during the year, although the candle trade shows no great progress. This is to be expected owing to the extension of electricity. Soap-manufacturers, however, consider their prospects are good, and by means of exhibitions and extensive advertising are greatly extending their sales. There is no reason why the domestic market should not be almost wholly supplied by New Zealand manufacturers. Soap to the value of £89,567 was imported last year; and it is beyond question that the local factories can make soap equal to the best imported at competitive prices.