

slight improvement experienced is expected to be maintained during the coming year. The sheet-metal industry is prosperous, and the domestic section of engineering discloses increased output and considerable development and improvements in the manufacture of gas, electric, and fuel stoves, and heating-appliances.

#### BOOT AND SHOE MAKING.

Output : 1906, £501,000 ; 1924, £1,355,000 ; 1925, £1,226,000. Employees : 1924, 2,308 ; 1925, 2,319.

The manufacturers of boots and shoes state that there is not sufficient demand for New-Zealand-made boots and shoes to absorb the skilled labour that is offering. The industry is still depressed as a result of heavy importations of lower grades of footwear, much of which is still on the market. The evidence indicates that those factories which have specialized in particular classes of footwear are generally in a better position than those making a wide range of samples.

#### CLOTHING.

Output : 1906, £423,000 ; 1924, £2,400,000 ; 1925, £2,339,000. Employees : 1924, 6,576 ; 1925, 6,426.

The reduced output in this industry of approximately £60,000 is accounted for by the fact that heavy importations of ready-made clothing were received in New Zealand during 1924 and the early part of 1925. It will be noticed that there was a reduction in the number of hands employed to the extent of 150. Since March, 1925, a slight improvement has been experienced. This, possibly, so far as the South Island is concerned, may be attributed to some extent to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, and also to the fact that locally made light tweeds are again fashionable for ladies' overcoats and costumes. North Island manufacturers, on the other hand, state that business is quiet, although there are indications of a slight improvement. Generally speaking, however, the prospects are not bright. Plenty of skilled labour is available, and there is a considerable amount of unemployment in this class of labour in each of the four centres.

#### ROPE AND TWINE.

Output : 1906, £100,000 ; 1924, £218,000 ; 1925, £223,000. Employees : 1924, 230 ; 1925, 209.

Although the output in this industry shows a slight increase in value, the number of hands employed has been reduced by twenty-one. This is attributable to the fact that during the year ended 31st March, 1925, a small harvest resulted in a much reduced demand for binder-twine. On the other hand, the demand for rope was substantial, and sales were satisfactory. It is not likely that the figures for the year ended March, 1926, will show much improvement in this industry, but there are good prospects for the coming season.

#### PRINTING, PUBLISHING, AND BOOKBINDING.

Output : 1906, £1,068,000 ; 1924, £3,623,000 ; 1925, £4,053,000. Employees : 1924, 4,980 ; 1925, 5,886.

Increased production during 1924-25 indicated prosperity ; for the year ended March, 1926, however, those engaged in this industry in the North Island state that business had been quiet. Reports from the South Island, on the other hand, show that a very satisfactory year has been experienced. With the exception of linotype operators, skilled labour is plentiful.

#### BRICK, TILES, AND POTTERY.

Output : 1906, £217,000 ; 1924, £599,000 ; 1925, £635,000. Employees : 1924, 1,177 ; 1925, 1,250.

For the year ended 31st March, 1925, this industry again experienced a prosperous period. With a possible tightening of the money-market owing to excessive importations during the past year the prospects for building finance are not particularly bright, and this industry may consequently suffer to some extent.

#### BISCUITS AND CONFECTIONERY.

Output : 1906, £364,000 ; 1924, £1,384,000 ; 1925, £1,470,000. Employees : 1924, 2,064 ; 1925, 2,138.

A very decided improvement in this industry may be attributed to the excellent quality of the confectionery and biscuits that are being turned out by local manufacturers. Improved packing and display are also increasing the demand. The output in 1924-25 increased by £85,000, while the year ending 31st March, 1926, has probably shown a further increase in production. Although the local industry is facing rather keen competition from overseas manufacturers, prospects for the ensuing year are good.

#### SAUCES, PICKLES, AND VINEGARS.

Output : 1906, £56,000 ; 1924, £198,000 ; 1925, £200,000. Employees : 1924, 203 ; 1925, 187.

Although there were less hands employed in this industry to the 31st March, 1925, than there were in the previous year, the output increased slightly. Generally speaking, conditions and prospects are normal.

#### SOAP AND CANDLES.

Output : 1906, £179,000 ; 1924, £497,000 ; 1925, £561,000. Employees : 1924, 380 ; 1925, 394.

Competition from overseas is very keen in all fancy lines manufactured in this industry. Ample labour is available in both Islands for all requirements. Business in the candle section continues to diminish. The progress made in this industry is attributable to the fact that manufacturers are paying more attention to the quality and packing of fancy soaps. Indications point in the direction of steady progress in this section.