

The small increase up to 1921 is probably indicative of the growth of dairying and the relative decline of extensive pastoral farming. The increase in recent years is particularly interesting. It is probably indicative of the fact noted earlier—that with more intensive dairy farming, resulting in increased carrying-capacity as a result of mechanization and improved farming techniques—an important increase in the labour requirements of dairy-farms has occurred. For instance, in the early “twenties” the average dairy-farm would carry between forty and fifty cows per hundred acres. The carrying-capacity has probably increased 50 per cent., being sufficient to call for at least one further hand on the average dairy-farm.

The question of the future absorptive-capacity of agriculture arising from the above analysis will be discussed in a subsequent section.

X. OTHER PRIMARY PRODUCTION

A. COAL-MINING

Considerable evidence was adduced before the Committee in relation to the shortage of coal, and it was maintained that steps should be taken to encourage the immigration of persons prepared to work in the coal-mines. It is therefore of interest to examine the general personnel structure of coal-mining during the present century. The following table, taken from the respective censuses, gives the number of persons engaged in coal-mining from 1901 to 1936 :—

Table No. 85.—Table showing the Number of Persons engaged in Coal-mining at the various Censuses from 1901 to 1936

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1901	2,203	1921	4,780
1906	2,939	1926	4,950
1911	4,112	1936	5,255
1916	4,189		

It should be noted that the table shows the number of persons occupied, and not the wage-earners. It includes a small number of employers and owners working on their own account. The very steady rise from 1901 to 1911, and the lesser rise from that date, gives some indication of the expansion of coal-mining, and is definitely related to the increasing size of the population and the increase in industrial activity in the Dominion. No separate figures are available as at the census dates from 1901 to 1921 to show the number of wage-earners. The 1926 census shows 4,696 wage-earners, and the 1936 census 4,006 wage-earners, but also shows that, in addition, 1,429 coal-miners were wholly or partly unemployed.

Another approach to the same problem is given in the following table, which is compiled on a different basis :—

Table No. 86.—Table showing the Number of Persons employed above and below Ground in Coal-mines in New Zealand from 1932 to 1945

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1932	4,636	1939	4,762
1933	4,386	1940	5,046
1934	4,478	1941	4,991
1935	4,231	1942	4,997
1936	4,257	1943	5,374
1937	4,417	1944	5,594
1938	4,563	1945	5,592