

In general, it can be said that there is a remarkable expansion in industry in a number of fields where the products were previously imported. The policy by which a large proportion of motor bodies are built in the Dominion has created an important and flourishing industry. In the engineering fields developments have been rapid and important. This is particularly true in the field of electrical engineering. It would not be in place in a study such as this to analyse the effects of these recent developments on the structure of our imports; in fact, it would be extremely difficult to draw any firm conclusions from such an analysis, since the trends had not fully worked themselves out by the outbreak of the war in 1939, and the wartime imports are not a true indication of the effects of industrial expansion in the Dominion. The only important industry which shows any tendency to contract is in the field of printing, publishing, and bookbinding. The contraction here is largely due to the incidence of the war, and probably is not a true indication of the trends at work in the Dominion. Much of the printing work demanded during the war was of a non-essential character, and, as a consequence, employees tended to drift from the printing industry to other industries, and those who entered the Armed Forces were not replaced; in fact, in terms of demand and potential demand, the printing industry in New Zealand is remarkably buoyant. The tendency to reprint books in the Dominion rather than to import the finished product is growing rapidly, and all printing-works at the present day are very short of operatives, with a growing accumulation of unsatisfied work.

Summing up this discussion of secondary industries in the Dominion, the following general trends may be observed. There is no falling off in the absolute importance of what might be called the servicing and locality industries. They have, however, become of less relative importance. On the other hand, there is a very definite expansion of manufacturing industries, particularly since the depression—a tendency which was reinforced by wartime conditions, when it became impossible to import many of the desired commodities, and when it became necessary for New Zealand to satisfy within its own shores many of the demands which were previously satisfied with imports. There is little doubt that the policies adopted during the past decade and a half have stimulated secondary industries in the Dominion. As pointed out earlier, evidence was available to show that in terms of comparative costs New Zealand was to-day in a more favourable position than ever before in her history, and consequently the competitive position of New Zealand industries was stronger, at least in terms of internal demand. The net result of this situation is that, quite apart from increasing purchasing-power, which creates an increasing demand, New Zealand is within its own borders able to satisfy at a competitive cost the demand for many of the goods which were previously imported to this country. If to this monetary fact is added the fact that the purchasing-power of the community is very buoyant it can be seen that the immediate future for secondary industries in New Zealand is relatively bright. The evidence adduced before the Committee was to the effect that many new industries were proposing to start in the Dominion, and that the demand for employees was completely unsatisfied in practically all the manufacturing industries of the country. The Industries and Commerce Department in its evidence states—

“There are continuously under consideration with us at one time a number of proposals for the establishment of new industries or the expansion of existing ones, and no better illustration of the extent of the trend of industrial development is needed than in the fact that at this moment there are pending and potential proposals with us for twenty-three new industrial units with a following new employment potential—males, 3,473; females, 1,138: total, 4,611. The past figures of industrial population and the evident keenness and interest in industry, as shown by our own recent figures, are only too clear an indication of what might be expected in the future.”

There was some suggestion that certain English firms which are considering setting up manufacturing institutions in New Zealand propose to bring their own employees from England because of the impossibility of securing adequate labour supplies in the Dominion.