

NUMBER OF MEN ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT SINCE INCEPTION TO DATE.

Year.	Total.	Married.	Single.	Dependants.	Private Work.	Government Work.
1891-92	2,593	1,054	1,539	4,729	1,730	863
1892-93	3,874	1,808	2,066	7,802	2,518	1,356
1893-94	3,341	1,836	1,505	7,942	1,019	2,322
1894-95	3,030	2,007	1,023	8,883	894	2,136
1895-96	2,871	1,880	991	8,424	708	2,163
1896-97	1,718	1,084	634	4,719	652	1,066
1897-98	2,035	1,163	872	4,928	544	1,491
1898-99	2,115	1,178	937	4,759	638	1,477
1899-1900	2,147	1,115	1,032	4,471	486	1,661
1900-1	3,124	1,326	1,798	5,432	519	2,605
1901-2	1,830	713	1,117	2,747	396	1,434
	28,678	15,164	13,514	64,836	10,104	18,574

FACORIES.

There is reason for congratulation in the improved statute which Parliament presented last session to the colony as the Factories Act. Many of its provisions are distinctly in advance of any previous legislation. I may instance particularly those dealing with hygiene and cleanliness. It is now possible with the aid of the Health Department to keep not only the factories, but the localities adjoining factories, in a healthy condition. Formerly, however spotlessly clean the interior of a factory might be kept, however perfect and effective its ventilation might be, all good result could be neutralised by the impure state of surrounding properties. Indeed, in some cases, the more complete the ventilation and the more outer air admitted into the factory the more foul gases and poisonous exhalations penetrated to the lungs of the workers. Nor did local authorities, either by their own impartial efforts or by alacrity shown in meeting requests of the Factory Inspectors, prove themselves capable of understanding the gravity of the situation, or the necessities of the industrial population. When, however, the newly constituted Department of Health came into existence, its appreciation of the fact that vested interests are small matters compared with the public welfare brought its officers as powerful allies to the aid of the Inspectors of Factories, and has earned the gratitude of the Department of Labour. There is now no reason why New Zealand should not shortly become a model community so far as its industrial establishments are concerned.

The following table shows the increase in the number of factories, and hands employed therein during the last few years:—

Year.	Factory-workers.	Increase.
1895	29,879	...
1896	32,387	2,508
1897	36,918	4,531
1898	39,672	2,754
1899	45,305	5,633
1900	48,938	3,633
1901	53,460	4,522
1902 (approximate only)*	55,395	1,935
Total increase	...	25,516

* The figures here given for 1902 are far below the real number. Unfortunately the change of period of registration wrought by "The Factories Act, 1901," has caused the figures for this year to be unreliable and useless for comparative purposes. Formerly factories were registered during January, and the number of persons employed at that period could be compiled and furnished in the annual report. Now, however, the factory certificate expires on the 31st March, and the new registration is not effected until April, so that there are no statistics available for this report after January, 1901, to the 31st March, 1902. The approximate increase of 1,935 persons above given is arrived at by taking the number of persons employed in January 1901, and adding thereto the number notified as employed in new factories starting since that date. This, of course, leaves out the expansion of labour in factories previously established and in working-order. The exact number of persons employed in factories at the end of March, 1902 (or, more correctly, on the 1st April, 1902), cannot be given until the annual report for 1903 appears.