

at Wellington the trade was busy and even short of skilled hands, at Ashburton overtime was occasionally worked, while at Dunedin, though business was at times inclined to be slack, skilled weavers were wanted. The flax-milling business was very prosperous, but many mills are closing down for the winter. Printing-works, laundries, dye-works, agricultural-implement works, coach-building, cabinetmaking, furniture, and sash and door factories, freezing-works, &c., have had a very successful year. Almost the only trade which keeps behind the general advance is that of the maker of saddlery and harness; for this the extension of the tram system and the introduction of motor-cars and cycles have probably to answer. Sawmill hands were in demand at Invercargill, but in Dannevirke and its neighbourhood the timber industry languishes through much of the available forest being cleared of timber.

Unskilled labour has had a period of special activity, owing partly to the dry season already alluded to. The extension of the tram system in the cities, the active building operations, drainage-works at Timaru, recreation-grounds at Wellington, Exhibition business at Christchurch, &c., together with the large numbers employed by Government on the Main Trunk Railway, absorbed all surplus labour. Invercargill in the South and Whangarei in the North equally complained of shortage of farm labourers, so that the large number of immigrants absorbed by New Zealand of late years has by no means filled the demands of farmers beyond requirements.

The following table shows the number of men actually assisted by the Labour Department to proceed to employment.

NUMBER OF MEN ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT SINCE INSTITUTION 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
1902-3	3,704	1,492	2,212	5,934	580	3,124
1903-4	2,860	777	2,083	3,085	1,216	1,644
1904-5	3,130	953	2,177	3,425	1,960	1,170
1905-6	6,712	2,027	4,685	7,351	1,929	4,783
1906-7	7,393	1,427	5,966	4,187	2,718	4,675
	52,477	21,840	30,637	88,818	18,507	33,970

We thus perceive that during sixteen years the Department of Labour has been of practical assistance to 141,295 persons, including the dependants of the workmen. The number sent to public works appears excessive when compared with those forwarded to private employers, but it must be remembered that large parties of men were required for railway-construction, and the number sent to private work this year is greatly in advance of the number sent to public works before the unusual pressure put on to finish the Main Trunk and other railway lines began. That the single men greatly outnumber the married ones shows (as preference of employment is given to married men) that married men have far less need to apply to the Department for work than was the case some years ago.

Taking the whole body of men assisted during last year, we find that of these 1,053 came lately from Great Britain, 485 from Australia, and 149 from foreign countries; the remainder were New-Zealanders. One hundred and forty-six wives (with their families) were forwarded to their husbands.

FACTORIES.

This year has seen the largest increase of factories recorded for some years in the colony. There are 907 more factories and 4,907 more workers in evidence than were shown last year. In the last thirteen years (since which time there has been no alteration which widened the scope of definition of "factory") the factories have increased from 4,109 to 10,788; the factory-workers