

FACTORIES.

The numbers of persons registered as being engaged in factories since 1895 are enumerated in the following table :—

Year.	Factories.	Increase.	Factory-workers.	Increase.
1895	4,109	...	29,879	...
1896	4,647	538	32,387	2,508
1897	5,177	530	36,918	4,531
1898	5,601	424	39,672	2,754
1899	6,286	685	45,305	5,633
1900	6,438	152	48,938	3,633
1901	6,744	306	53,460	4,522
1902	7,203	459	55,395	1,935
1903	7,675	472	59,047	3,652
1904	8,373	698	63,968	4,921
1905	9,123	750	67,713	3,745
1906	9,881	758	70,403	2,690
1907	10,788	907	75,310	4,907
1908	11,586	798	78,625	3,315
1909	12,040	454	78,848	223
1910	12,302	262	77,806	Decrease. 1,042
Total increase	..	8,193	...	47,927

I regret to report that for the first time in the industrial history of the Dominion this year shows a decrease in the number of persons employed in manufacture. The establishments employing workers are more numerous, but the employees are fewer. This is, however, accounted for by the fact that in some cases the men or women thrown out of work have set up small businesses for themselves which in most cases would not come under the Factories Act, or turned to other occupations, while at the same time the scarcity of young people entering industrial life causes further vacancies in the ranks of the workers in large factories. Further on, the figures show the rapid loss of young people under twenty-one years of age from the factories, a loss more than accounting for the above decrease.

The total amount of wages paid in manufacture last year was £5,890,941, an increase on the previous year of £180,715, a rise of 3·2 per cent. This compares poorly with that of the previous year, in which the advance was £391,207, and at the rate of 7·3 per cent. When, however, it is taken into consideration that for some time the building trades suffered severe depression, and that the ship-building, iron, and metal trades have had a very dull time indeed, the fact that the amount of wages paid during last year in manufactures was the highest yet noted inspires confidence, especially with the better prospects before us at present.

The following table shows how the wages were distributed in the different trades :—

Wages paid in the Several Trades, 1st April, 1908, to 31st March, 1909.

Class.	Wages paid during the Years		Increase.	Increase Percentage.
	1909-10.	1908-9.		
	£	£	£	
Food trades	1,157,058	1,094,933	62,125	5·7
Woodworking trades	1,035,489	1,017,393	18,096	1·8
Iron and metal trades	1,018,657	993,408	25,249	2·5
Clothing trades	844,621	821,716	22,905	2·8
Printing and stationery trades	366,869	356,680	10,189	2·9
Leather-working trades	348,454	339,438	9,016	2·7
Stone, clay, and mineral trades	222,901	215,494	7,407	3·4
Light, heat, and power trades	147,879	137,346	10,533	7·6
Chemical and by-product trades	92,267	74,459	17,808	23·9
Watch and jewellery trades	45,582	44,441	1,141	2·6
Paper and cardboard trades	24,504	20,199	4,305	21·3
Ship building and repairing trades	77,458	78,564	Decrease. 1,106	..
Basket and wicker trades	17,281	18,178	897	..
Miscellaneous, not included above	491,921	497,977	6,056	..
Totals	5,890,941	5,710,226	180,715	3·2