

As the result of inquiries made in the different districts of the Dominion the following are some of the reasons that are given to account for the present state of the labour market :—

Farming : Adverse financial conditions have affected employment on farms ; farmers are performing their work themselves instead of employing labour, while others are holding up work until a more opportune time.

Farm machinery : The introduction of electric power, motor-tractors, and other like vehicles has displaced a considerable amount of labour.

Machinery for other industries : New labour-saving machinery has also displaced a good deal of labour in town and country, such as concrete-mixers, steam navvies, and other appliances for handling metal and sand, coal-grabs, appliances for the bulk handling of petrol, and so on.

Importations : Imported goods are said to have displaced locally-manufactured goods to a considerable extent—for example, timber, agricultural machinery, clothing, and boots.

Completion of a number of large works—viz., large buildings in the cities, also various drainage, water, and hydro-electric works in different parts of the Dominion.

Electric-power, also oil for steamers, thus replacing coal : This factor affects not only coal-miners and waterside workers, but seamen, workers in factories, &c.

Seamen : Some seamen appear to have come from abroad and remained in New Zealand.

Total engagements made at the Department's employment bureaux during 1926-27, 10,268 (3,260 for public and other Government works, 1,716 for local bodies, 5,292 for private employment) ; dependants, 16,925 ; in addition 465 persons were assisted by the advancing of railway fares or otherwise. 1925-26 : 3,397 engagements (363 for public works, 3,034 for private employment) ; dependants, 3,533.

FACTORIES ACT.

Year.	Number of Factories registered.	Movement.	Number of Factory Workers.	Movement.
1913-14 (before the war) ..	13,469	94 (increase)	87,517	919 (increase).
1914-15	13,937	468 ..	88,812	1,295 ..
1915-16 (since the war began) ..	13,214	723 (decrease)	83,011	5,801 (decrease).
1916-17	12,455	759 ..	78,188	4,823 ..
1917-18	12,485	30 (increase)	79,653	1,465 (increase).
1918-19	12,444	41 (decrease)	82,783	3,130 ..
1919-20 (after the war) ..	13,490	1,046 (increase)	85,591	2,808 ..
1920-21	13,661	171 ..	96,603	11,012 ..
1921-22	14,013	352 ..	96,980	377 ..
1922-23	14,535	522 ..	92,608	4,372 (decrease).
1923-24	15,009	474 ..	97,731	5,123 (increase).
1924-25	15,868	859 ..	99,423	1,692 ..
1925-26	16,311	443 ..	102,321	2,898 ..
1926-27	16,619	308 ..	103,404	1,083 ..

The figures as to the number of factories and the workers employed therein do not purport to coincide with those of the Government Statistician (Census of Industrial Manufacturers), as his returns, which are drawn up purely for statistical purposes, do not cover various small establishments that are included as factories under the Factories Act.

It might be explained that the above figures are those ascertained at registration time (April in each year), except that, in order to include factories in seasonal industries which might be closed in April, any new establishments opened during the year are added. Any fall in the number of factory-workers occurring by reason of trade depression during the year will therefore be disclosed in the following year's figures.

ACCIDENTS.

As mentioned in last year's report, in order that the accident statistics may be comparable with the statistics of other countries, as urged by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1923, the figures cover the calendar year instead of the financial year.

The total number of accidents in factories reported during the year ended 31st December is 2,768, an increase of 342 over the previous year. This increase is mainly accounted for by the extra number of accidents reported from freezing-works—viz., 1,325—as against 1,042 in the previous year, an increase of 283. These accidents were, however, largely of a minor nature, and in 827 instances resulted in an absence of less than fourteen days.

Of the 2,768 accidents reported, only 65 occurred to workers under sixteen years of age, 520 to those between sixteen and twenty, and the remaining 2,183 to those above that age.

The number of fatal accidents shows an increase—viz., thirteen, as against seven the previous year. Particulars of each of these accidents are given below. A close investigation is made into the causes of all accidents, with a view, so far as possible, to preventing similar occurrences. Particulars of all reported accidents are now forwarded to the Government Statistician, who prepares statistics for comparison purposes on the same lines as those issued by statisticians in other countries. From his figures the following is gathered :—