

The next table shows the distribution of both proprietors and wage-earners amongst the chief industrial groups. Unclassified groups are omitted, and the totals are therefore a little less than in the preceding tables :—

Industrial Groups.

	Proprietors.		Wage-earners.	
	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.
Primary production	69,600	56·8	71,900	20·0
Industrial	19,700	16·1	98,700	27·5
Transport and communication	4,900	4·0	50,300	14·0
Commerce and finance	16,000	13·1	59,700	16·7
Public administration and professional	7,600	6·2	42,500	11·8
Domestic and personal service	4,700	3·8	36,000	10·0
Totals	122,500	100·0	359,100	100·0

This table shows the same average proportion of one proprietor to three wage-earners, but there are wide differences in the industrial groups from which the average is taken. In primary production the number of proprietors almost equals the number of wage-earners. More than half the proprietors and one-fifth of the wage-earners are found in this group, and together they constitute the most numerous and important single group of producers in the Dominion. Obviously, the dominant type of organization in this group is the one-man farm. In other groups the number of wage-earners per proprietor varies from ten in transport and communication to less than four in commerce and finance. But the whole table, with its average of only three wage-earners to each proprietor, furnishes convincing evidence that the commonest type of business in New Zealand is very small, and that the great majority of businesses are under the control of working proprietors whose incomes and standards of life probably differ but little from those of the wage-earners they employ.

2. WAGE-EARNERS, TRADE-UNIONS, AND ARBITRATION.

To compare the foregoing figures (from the 1921 census report) with figures for 1925 and 1926 they require to be brought up to date. They are the latest available, but the proportions of wage-earners and proprietors have changed little over the fifteen years ended 1921, and it is fair to assume they have changed little in 1921–26. Between 1921 and 1925 the population increased $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. A similar increase brings the total of proprietors up to 134,000 and the total of wage-earners up to 402,000.

It is commonly assumed that the Arbitration Court settles wage disputes between wage-earners and their employers; but wage-earners approach the Arbitration Court only through their registered trade-unions. Out of the 402,000 wage-earners, only 100,500, or 25 per cent., were financial members of trade-unions in 1925. In addition, there is a varying number of unfinancial members not included in the union returns, but estimated by a labour authority at about 20 per cent. These unionists are not fully representative of the whole of industry, but rather represent special industrial groups. The range and extent of representation are shown in the following tables. Estimates have been made for the 1925 numbers in industrial groups by adding $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. (the population increase) to the 1921 census numbers for each group, and these are compared with the trade returns for each group in 1925 :—

Wage-earners and Trade-unionists—Numbers.

	Total Wage-earners.	Trade-unionists.	Estimated Non-unionists.*
Industrial	107,000	51,000	56,000
Transport and communication	54,500	26,900	27,600
Domestic and personal service	39,000	7,800	31,200
Primary production	78,000	6,100	71,900
Commerce and finance, public administration, professional, and unclassified	123,500	8,600	114,900
Totals	402,000	100,400	301,600

* Including unfinancial unionists, totalling perhaps 20,000.

In the next table these figures have been reduced to percentages :—

Wage-earners and Trade-unionists—Percentages.

	Per Cent. of Total Wage-earners.	Per Cent. of Total Unionists.	Per Cent. of Groups who are Unionists.*
Industrial	26·6	50·8	47·7
Transport and communication	13·5	26·7	49·3
Domestic and personal service	9·7	7·8	20·0
Primary production	19·4	6·1	7·8
Commerce and finance, public administration and professional, miscellaneous	30·8	8·6	7·0
	100·0	100·0	25·0

* Financial unionists only.

It is not certain that the industrial and unionist groups are exactly comparable in the above tables, but they are certainly comparable in sufficient measure to justify the general conclusions of the table, which brings out clearly the comparatively narrow range of trade-unionism amongst the wage-earners. In the industrial group, mainly manufacturers, building, printing, &c., about half of the wage-earners are unionists. This proportion would be greater if apprentices and other embryo unionists were included. A similar proportion holds for the transport group, including shipping, wharves, railways, &c. Domestic and personal service has 20 per cent. of its wage-earners in trade-unions, and these are mainly hotel and restaurant workers. In primary production less than 8 per cent. of the wage-earners are unionists, and of these unionists more than half are miners. There are 8,600 "miscellaneous" unionists, who may be spread over the other groups; but it appears that, though there are some guilds and other associations, unionism is negligible in the agricultural and pastoral, commerce and finance, and public administration and professional groups, who together constitute, roughly, half of the total wage-earners.