

Biscuit and Confectionery Making.

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—		1925.	1926.	1927.
Establishments (number)	..	64	69	79
Employees (number)	..	2,404	2,494	2,655
Wages paid	..	£318,703	£347,878	£365,442
Value of output	..	£1,469,808	£1,588,459	£1,626,269
Value added by manufacture	..	£700,150	£805,691	£841,798

This industry is steadily growing, but during the five years ended 31st March, 1927, the percentage of New Zealand production to total consumption had fallen 4 per cent. ; in other words, imports have increased at a greater rate than local production. There is still more than £300,000 worth of confectionery coming into New Zealand, much of which might reasonably be made within the Dominion.

This industry is of importance in respect of the employment afforded and the annual wage-payment. It absorbs considerable quantities of locally-produced raw materials—viz., sugar, flour, butter, eggs, and Samoan cocoa-beans.

The prospects in this industry are bright, and indications point to development in the number of establishments and employees engaged.

Furniture and Cabinet Making.

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—		1925.	1926.	1927.
Establishments (number)	..	286	311	337
Employees (number)	..	2,337	2,767	2,751
Wages paid	..	£413,921	£532,808	£538,386
Value of output	..	£1,256,073	£1,375,620	£1,413,054
Value added by manufacture	..	£693,314	£747,900	£783,414

The information contained in the statistics quoted above reveals progress in this industry. Reports received by the Department regarding trade during the past twelve months indicate that trade has been quiet in ordinary wooden furniture, highly satisfactory in upholstery-work, and good in a few cases where manufacturers are specializing in "period" lines. New Zealand beech is becoming increasingly popular as furniture-timber, and has proved itself both attractive and durable. Manufacturers of bedding-materials have had a fairly successful year. The demand for gramophones has fallen off, but there are indications that the competition from radio broadcasting is not now so keen as formerly and that the demand for gramophones is likely to recover.

Ham and Bacon Factories.

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—		1925.	1926.	1927.
Establishments (number)	..	36	38	44
Employees (number)	..	333	353	401
Wages paid	..	£76,797	£82,838	£93,378
Value of output	..	£959,189	£1,009,020	£1,164,180
Value added by manufacture	..	£312,209	£315,672	£240,289
Cost of materials used	..	£646,980	£783,348	£923,891

The outstanding features disclosed by the above figures are the increased amounts paid for materials used and the consistent growth of this industry generally. Although the total return for the finished products increased appreciably, prices were lower. The advance in cost of raw materials in comparison with the value of the products resulted in a substantial decline in the profit margin. In the period 1927–28 prices of raw materials were lower than in the previous year, and conditions were in that respect much more favourable to the ham and bacon manufacturers than in the somewhat exceptional year 1926–27.

Bricks, Pipes, Tiles, and Pottery Making.

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—		1925.	1926.	1927.
Establishments (number)	..	68	71	73
Employees (number)	..	1,283	1,392	1,316
Wages paid	..	£281,421	£310,194	£303,561
Value of output	..	£634,764	£700,183	£697,477
Value added by manufacture	..	£607,293	£664,912	£666,096

It will be seen that these industries are, in the aggregate, maintaining a fairly steady position. Some progress is being made in respect of the manufacture of grades of earthenware not previously produced in New Zealand. In the Otago District earthenware cisterns, sinks, and other sanitary goods of good quality are now being made and sold at competitive prices. Canterbury manufacturers are developing a trade in earthenware jars and porcelain supports for electric-heating elements.