

**Agricultural :** There has been a splendid season, with abundant yields of well-harvested grain, and the farming community has reason to be well content with the quantity and quality of its products. Prices for some grains have fallen very low as compared with previous years, but it is confidently expected that a rise will set in early in the winter. In any case, the increased yields will more than compensate for the drop in prices.

**Pastoral :** Pastoralists have not had such a good season as their agricultural brethren. Moist weather greatly hampered shearing operations, and the season was, especially on back-country stations, long drawn out. Prices for most classes of wool increased on closing sales of the 1908 period, but hardly came up to the high rates ruling in years previous to that. The earlier clips came into store in fine condition, and were easily quitted. Meat-freezing has been considerably affected by the dullness in the Home market. Sheep and lambs have come to hand very spasmodically, farmers evidently preferring to hold back, in the hope that prices would rise. The abundant supply of feed acted as an inducement for owners of stock to "hang on" till very late in the season, consequently killing at the different works was considerably retarded, and 1909 will probably be remembered as a very backward year so far as meat-freezing is concerned.

**Bush sawmilling :** There was a slump in the trade early in the year, and a number of mills closed down for a short period. In most cases a fresh start was made with the new year, and all hands have been kept steadily going ever since. The demand for timber has slackened off considerably as compared with previous years, and in many cases the timber being cut is for stock purposes, in anticipation of a rush setting in. The bush is gradually getting further back from the railway-lines, and arterial roads have been necessary, thus increasing the cost of output and the price to the user. There was no increase in the number of mills operating near Invercargill during the year.

**Flax-milling :** A little more life has been shown in this industry during the year, and several mills that had to close down for want of the raw material are now in full swing, and employing a fair number of hands. During the year there was a slight demand for experienced flax-mill hands for mills in the outlying district, and all men and boys having any experience had little difficulty in finding employment. The flax areas near to the road and railway-lines are gradually being stripped, and in many cases the blade-flax has to be carted long distances to the mill.

**Building trades :** There has not been the briskness of previous years in these trades during the year just closed. The number of private residences erected has shown a decided falling-off as compared with the last ten years. The erection of some fine business blocks in Invercargill has helped, however, to keep a number of tradesmen in the different branches fully employed. Speculative building is practically dead, and anything now being built is for the immediate use of owners. Several improvements to large town buildings are mentioned, which, should they eventuate, will assist to tide over the approaching winter. In country districts building has gone on almost without intermission, many farmers having made considerable alterations and additions to their homesteads. Sash, door, and joinery factories have been kept fully employed throughout the year.

**Iron trades :** Engineering, boilermaking, range and grate making, and agricultural-implement making have all felt the dullness which has passed over the Dominion, although in some foundries a considerable amount of overtime had to be worked to keep pace with orders. Sales for agricultural machinery was not so good as in previous years, but this may be accounted for in the main owing to the number of landowners who temporarily gave up cropping for grazing; consequent on the fall in prices for mutton, it may be expected that a number of those now growing mutton will return to grain-growing, and a greater demand for agricultural implements set in.

**Plumbing and gasfitting, &c.,** have, in consequence of the quietness in the building trade, had a slower year than has been their experience for some time. There has, however, been enough work to keep all hands employed, and there has not been any complaint to the Department from unemployed artisans in any of the trades mentioned.

**Furniture trades :** Cabinetmakers, upholsterers, and French-polishers have been kept steadily going throughout the year, and a fair amount of overtime was worked in the different factories.

**Coachbuilding :** This trade, which embraces the building of coaches, carriages, wagons, and motor bodies, has had a very successful year, and all tradesmen engaged in the different branches of the trade have made full time.

**Boot and shoe trade :** This trade has been steady throughout the year. Very little overtime has been worked, but there has been no complaint from operatives, male or female, on account of slackness.

**Tailoring :** Trade has been good all through the year. There was more overtime worked in this trade than in any other in the district. There has been a demand for good tailors and tailoresses, and there has been no need for first-class tradespeople to be out of employment. There seems to be a decided shortage of suitable girls as apprentices to the tailoring.

**Dressmaking and millinery :** These allied trades have been busy right through, and in both a considerable amount of overtime has been worked.

**Hosiery and shirt making** have been kept fairly busy during the year, and there has been some demand for girls for machinery, &c.

#### EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

During the year 158 men were assisted to employment; of these, 122 were single, and 36 married having 112 persons depending on them. 44 were sent to private employment and 114 to Government co-operative works. In the early part of the last quarter of the year there was a brisk demand for experienced farm hands, and some difficulty was found in procuring men to fill the positions offering.