

A pronounced shortage of agricultural workers was experienced during the early summer months, and no difficulty was experienced in placing unskilled hands at this work, provided they were willing and active. This employment was largely sought by new arrivals from overseas, who desired the training in order to fit them to take up farming on their own account after the necessary experience had been gained.

The clothing trades, including dressmaking and millinery, were very brisk indeed during the year, and a fresh wave of prosperity seems to have followed the tailoring industry, as the employees in this branch found very ready employment throughout the year.

In factories, as will be seen from the reports supplied by the departmental officers, there has been a continued dearth of labour, especially of girls and boys, and manufacturers have represented over and over again to the Department how greatly they have been handicapped through the want of hands. It has been suggested that the position could be met only by bringing immigrants to New Zealand, as it is quite apparent to even a casual observer that sufficient labour is not available in New Zealand itself. As to whether there is much chance of getting factory hands in Great Britain to come to New Zealand, I have very grave doubts. From time to time the shortage of hands in our manufacturing industries has been pointed out in the *Journal* of the Department, and large numbers of this publication are sent to the High Commissioner in London, who in turn distributes the information throughout Great Britain. I know that several New Zealand manufacturers have tried advertising in Great Britain for hands without any apparent success. No doubt the severance of family ties is a factor against young women workers immigrating to New Zealand, and again the employees in textile industries are able to earn fairly good money in the factories of Great Britain, and do not desire to come to New Zealand as long as they are making a comfortable living at Home. The official reports received by the Department from Great Britain bear out this statement—in fact, some of the more skilled workers receive wages in excess of those paid in New Zealand—and when the difference in the cost of living is taken into account the skilled factory-worker at Home has little to induce her to leave England, unless it be the better working-conditions ruling in the Dominion as to hours and holidays.

#### FACTORIES ACT.

The check experienced last year in our industrial growth proved to be temporary. For this year it is my pleasing duty to again record an increase in the number of factories and of the employees engaged therein. The following table shows the growth from 1905 to 1911 (31st March):—

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
1911	12,768	466	78,790	Increase. 984
Total increase	...	8,659	...	48,911

The increase in the number of factories registered last year is 466, and there are 984 more hands employed than during 1910.