

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

The Department is represented on the Executive of the Chamber of Commerce in each of the four chief centres, and has in all respects endeavoured to co-operate with those bodies in the development of trade and the elimination of commercial difficulties. Assistance has been rendered by the submission of reports and the collection of information on subjects of interest to and inquiry by the Chambers. The Department was also represented at the annual conference of the Associated Chambers of Commerce held in Dunedin in November last.

BRITISH COMMERCIAL DIPLOMATIC OFFICERS.

As a result of a generous offer made by the Imperial Government at the Imperial Economic Conference of 1923, the assistance in trade matters of certain officers of the British Diplomatic and Consular Services is now available to Dominion Governments. The Department has already taken advantage of this provision, and expects to be able to an increasing extent to secure the benefits arising from this extensive representation in countries and districts where no Dominion representative is as yet located. The convenience offered by this arrangement has been and will continue to be brought before the notice of New Zealand traders.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

The Department continues to maintain a close association with the manufacturers of the Dominion, and more particularly with those located in the four chief centres. The reopening of the Dunedin office of the Department has been welcomed by manufacturers in that area, who are freely availing themselves of the service which the Department can offer.

STATISTICAL.

The Department is pleased to be able to report that the figures of factory production prepared by the Government Statistician for the year ended 31st March, 1925, reveal substantial progress in most of the Dominion's secondary industries. The statistics show record high levels for value of output, employment, and wages paid. The following table shows the progress made during the year:—

	1924.	1925.	Increase.
Establishments	4,461	4,547	86
Employees	77,661	80,327	2,666
Wages and salaries paid	£14,573,441	£15,690,202	£1,115,761
Power employed (horse-power) ..	250,911	288,406	37,495
	£	£	£
Materials used	47,027,033	52,111,967	5,084,934
Value added	29,969,364	31,989,381	2,020,017
Total products	76,996,397	84,101,348	7,104,951
Land, plant, buildings	45,498,054	49,852,505	4,354,451

Establishments.—The industries which contributed mainly to the increase in the number of establishments were—Sawmilling, 25; furniture-making, 11; printing and publishing, 18; engineering, 18; motor and cycle engineering, 11.

Employees.—The more important increases in the number of hands engaged are to be found in the following industries: Sawmilling, 430; motor and cycle engineering, 299; printing, 906; biscuit and confectionery, 74; brick, tile, and pottery, 38; furniture, 123; flax-milling, 274; meat-freezing, 215. In the clothing and woollen-milling industries decreases have been recorded. The number of employees recorded as “administrative” represent 2,765, or 4 per cent.; “productive,” 71,760, or 89 per cent.; “distributive,” 5,802, or 7 per cent. of the total.

Wages and Salaries.—Approximately £53,000 per working-day were paid in wages by New Zealand factories during the year ended 31st March, 1925. The wages paid to all males employed averaged £209 per annum in 1924–25, compared with £197 10s. for the previous year. To females the average wage paid was £95, compared with a slightly higher figure for the previous year—viz., £95 10s. The general average for all employees for 1924–25 was £189 per annum, against £178 10s. in 1923–24.

Motive Power.—Substantial increases in motive power (particularly electric power) used per employee are noticeable for the period under review. Whereas the horse-power available per productive employee in 1923–24 was 3·6, the horse-power per employee for 1924–25 is 4·02. This is a remarkably high rate of increase.

Production.—The very substantial increase in value of production—viz., £7,104,951—is mainly attributable to the following industries: Meat freezing and preserving, £2,550,711; butter and cheese making, £1,109,432; sawmilling, sash and door making, £608,829; printing and publishing, £429,402; chemicals and fertilizers, £283,807; furniture making, £142,000; engineering, £196,000; biscuits and confectionery, £86,000; tanning, wool-scouring, and fellmongering, £107,000; paper bag and box making, £54,000. Unfortunately, there have been decreases of production in the woollen industry of £157,000, in the boot and shoe industry of £129,000, and the clothing industry of £61,000.

The following table shows in brief form the distribution and extent of factory production in the several districts of the Dominion. It is noteworthy that for the Dominion as a whole the value of the production of the meat-freezing and dairying industries is considerably less than the total value of the production of other factories.