

*Flax-milling.*

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—				1929.	1930.	1931.
Establishments (number)	..	..	..	60	57	22
Employees (number)	..	..	..	879	903	177
Wages paid	..	..	..	£145,348	£147,830	£26,223
Value of output	..	..	..	£329,340	£319,369	£47,722
Value added by manufacture	..	..	..	£259,856	£234,760	£39,417

*Rope and Twine making.*

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—				1929.	1930.	1931.
Establishments (number)	..	..	..	8	5	6
Employees (number)	..	..	..	218	219	225
Wages paid	..	..	..	£41,834	£41,858	£38,296
Value of output	..	..	..	£187,730	£191,396	£160,401
Value added by manufacture	..	..	..	£81,519	£80,820	£75,841

The flax-milling industry, as the figures indicate, is in a very parlous state, due to the unprecedented collapse of the world's fibre-market. At the present time the Unemployment Board is assisting the industry in keeping the New Zealand product on several markets by subsidizing the export trade. The manufacture of flax woolpacks, sacks, bags, &c., has been under consideration by certain interests, and a prospectus inviting application for share capital to exploit a patented softening process is now before the public. It is claimed by the promoters that woolpacks lower in price than those made from jute will be available to sheep-farmers. The Government have extended assistance to the company by permitting machinery (which cannot be produced economically in the Dominion) to be imported free of Customs duty. Customs protection against dumping tactics of competing products has also been promised by the Hon. the Minister of Customs.

The export statistics stated below show the serious decline in this once-flourishing industry :—

Year.					Tons.	£
1927	..	..	..	..	19,600	535,526
1928	..	..	..	..	15,683	394,450
1929	..	..	..	..	14,720	379,942
1930	..	..	..	..	9,493	221,923
1931	..	..	..	..	2,398	38,407

*Clothing.*

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—				1929.	1930.	1931.
Establishments (number)	..	..	..	228	237	244
Employees (number)	..	..	..	7,501	7,852	7,690
Wages paid	..	..	..	£943,198	£970,017	£916,045
Value of output	..	..	..	£2,691,690	£2,811,013	£2,597,928
Value added by manufacture	..	..	..	£1,359,753	£1,419,696	£1,278,801
Imports, calendar years :—						
Apparel and ready-made clothing (including fur clothing)				..	£2,267,326	£2,091,894
						£1,161,962

The position of this industry when compared with two preceding years has not shown any very serious decline. While sales of men's clothing show a decline, women's wearing-apparel has shown a slight improvement during the current year, and some units of the industry consider the outlook for next year as hopeful. The decline of £929,932 in ready-made clothing imported last year, representing a drop of 44 per cent., indicates that overseas manufacturers secured relatively a much smaller share of the depressed market requirements in comparison with New Zealand suppliers.

*Agricultural and Dairy Machinery and Implement making.*

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—				1929.	1930.	1931.
Establishments (number)	..	..	..	26	31	32
Employees (number)	..	..	..	826	963	850
Wages paid	..	..	..	£183,266	£211,383	£179,137
Value of output	..	..	..	£800,911	£844,880	£574,721
Value added by manufacture	..	..	..	£383,597	£420,889	£301,722

The manufacturers of these appliances attribute the principal cause of the decline which the statistics disclose to the financial position of farming industries. Business at present is very quiet and staffs have been reduced from 30 to 50 per cent. A manufacturer of hay rakes stated that the demand for this line is good, and sales are proceeding at prices fully competitive with imported lines.

*Woollen-manufacturing.*

Official statistics, year ended 31st March :—				1929.	1930.	1931.
Establishments (number)	..	..	..	12	12	10
Employees (number)	..	..	..	2,576	2,478	2,237
Wages paid	..	..	..	£399,560	£364,549	£328,826
Value of output	..	..	..	£1,236,578	£1,085,279	£896,677
Value added by manufacture	..	..	..	£647,699	£612,793	£571,926