

THE FURNITURE, CABINET-MAKING AND UPHOLSTERY
TRADES.

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Introductory.*

The tables on pages 118 to 122 are based on returns received from firms in Great Britain and Northern Ireland whose business in 1924 consisted wholly or mainly in the manufacture of wooden furniture, including shop and office fittings, and the making-up of bedding, cushions, carpets and draperies.

These trades contain a large number of small firms that maintain no precise record of their business transactions and some difficulty was experienced in obtaining satisfactory returns from many establishments of this kind. In the Census of 1912, about 4,600 returns were received from firms employing five persons or less on the average, compared with about 2,100 from firms that employed more than that number.

The number of separate returns summarised in the tables on pages 118 to 122 is 6,150. About 1,850 firms to which schedules were sent did not furnish returns and these firms consisted almost exclusively of small establishments of the kind referred to above. On the basis of the information available, it is estimated that they employed not more than about 5,500 persons in all, and that their

* See also the Notes on pp. vii to xv.

total net output probably did not exceed £1,000,000, or about 6 per cent. of the total net output of all firms that furnished returns. Generally speaking, the smaller firms are engaged in the manufacture of the more expensive varieties of furniture.

Summary of results.—The following table shows the main results of the Censuses of 1924 and 1907, comparisons between the figures for the two years being subject to the qualifications mentioned in the next paragraph. The information received in connexion with the Census of 1912, when details of output were not required from firms employing five persons or less, was not sufficiently complete to warrant its use for purposes of comparison.

Particulars.	Unit.	1924.	1907.
Value of goods made and work done (Gross output)	£'000	31,425	12,063
Cost of materials used	"	14,835	5,665
Paid for work given out to other firms	"	183	89
Net output	"	16,407	6,309
Average number of persons employed (excluding outworkers)	No.	83,897	76,415
Net output per person employed (excluding outworkers)	£	196	83
Mechanical power available :—			
Prime movers	H.P.	20,133	22,038
Electric motors driven by purchased electricity	"	30,851	(not recorded)

Qualifications affecting comparisons.—In considering the above table and the other tables in this report which show figures for the different censal years, it should be borne in mind that :—

(1) The comparability of figures relating to value or cost is affected by the changes which have taken place in the general purchasing power of money.

(2) The Census of 1907 covered Great Britain and the whole of Ireland, but that of 1924 applied only to Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The exclusion of Southern Ireland in 1924 does not seriously affect the comparability of the figures since, according to the Census of Production taken by the Government of the Irish Free State in respect of the year 1926, the total value of the goods made and work done in the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades in that year was returned as £393,000, and the average number of persons employed as 1,370.

Value of output and cost of materials.—The figures in the above table representing the value of goods made and work done, and the cost of materials used, are the aggregates of the figures recorded by the firms that made returns, and, for the reasons explained in paragraphs (i) and (ii) on pages xii and xiii, they probably over-state the value of the output of, and the cost of materials used by, the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades considered as a whole. The matter is discussed on page 115, where it is estimated

that the value, free from duplication, of the output of the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades in 1924 was about £30,000,000, and the cost of materials purchased from sources outside the trade and worked up into its products was about £13,600,000.

Production.

Detailed information relating to the production of the Furniture etc., Trades in 1924 is summarised in Table II on page 119.

In addition to the goods dealt with in this report, repairs to furniture, cabinet work, etc., valued, on a cost basis, at £23,000 were carried out in 1924 by H.M. Office of Works.* The corresponding figure for 1907 was £3,480.

Principal products.—The following statement shows, for 1924 and 1907, the value of the principal classes of output, including not only the furniture, furnishings, shop and office fittings, etc., manufactured by firms that made their returns on schedules for the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades but also those made by firms whose returns were furnished on schedules for other trades.

No returns were obtained from philanthropic institutions for 1924 and the figures for 1907 given in this report are exclusive of the output of such institutions in that year.

Kind of goods.	1924.		1907.
	Returned on schedules for		All trades.
	The Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades.	All trades.	
	Selling value.	Selling value.	Selling value.
	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.
Furniture of wood, upholstered or not upholstered	18,562	19,262	7,684
Casement curtains and art furnishings	482	500	(not recorded)
Bedding, cushions, quilts, etc.	4,429	4,480	1,515
Blinds	580	602	593
Fittings for shops, offices, banks, churches, ships, etc., and architectural wood work	2,122	2,507	1,143
Sofa and chair frames and other parts of furniture	658	783	107
Upholstery trimmings	432	458	109
Other articles of furniture, including cere-ments	225	267	111
TOTAL VALUE OF PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS	27,490	28,859	11,262

* See page 434.

The total value of the output of all products covered by the above table in 1924 was over two and a half times that of similar products in 1907. Probably this increase in aggregate value represents some increase in volume in each specified class of goods with the exception of *blinds*, and in this case the 1907 figures may contain some part of the output returned separately in 1924 as *casement curtains and art furnishings*. Some overlapping may also exist in the figures for each year between the headings *furniture of wood and fittings for shops, offices, etc.*

Other products.—In addition to the products of the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades enumerated above, there was returned the following output which, being of kinds mainly produced in other trades, is dealt with in the reports on those trades.

Kind of output.	1924.	1907.
	Selling value.	Selling value.
Bamboo and wicker furniture	£'000. 58	£'000. 90
Wire mattresses	565	161
Coffins	79	} 154
Crates, cases and boxes	78	
Other manufactures of wood	109	
Metal bedsteads	49	
Other goods made	289	
TOTAL VALUE	1,227	405

Repairs and work done.—The following table gives particulars of the making-up of carpets, curtains, etc., repair work and work done for the trade, as returned for 1924 and 1907:—

Kind of work.	1924.	1907.
	Amount received £'000.	Amount received £'000.
Making-up of carpets, curtains, draperies, etc.	711*	226
Repairs to furniture, cabinet work, etc. ..	1,348*	284
Work done for the trade:—		
Polishing	280	} 223
Upholstery work	149*	
Other work	200	
Building work (mainly decorating)	46	53
TOTAL VALUE OF WORK DONE	2,734	786

* The amounts shown against these headings include sums returned on schedules for other trades.

Firms were required to return the labour costs, together with an allowance for overhead charges and profits, in respect of the making-up of carpets, curtains and similar goods, since firms engaged in this class of work were frequently unable to state the selling value of the finished carpets, curtains, etc., which they themselves made-up, separately from that of similar goods which they bought and re-sold.

Value of output free from duplication.—The gross value of goods made and work done by firms whose returns were made on schedules for the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades was £31,425,000 in 1924. The chief duplication in this gross figure is in respect of parts of furniture, upholstery trimmings and other materials used by makers of furniture, in so far as such goods were made by firms that made returns on schedules for the Furniture, etc. Trades. The total value recorded under the headings for parts of furniture, upholstery trimmings and other furniture materials was £1,094,000. This sum represents the maximum amount of duplication due to this cause and would be reduced in so far as these semi-finished products were sold outside the trade, including any that were exported. Another probable element of duplication is that arising from the double inclusion of some of the work done for the trade, the total value of which was returned as £628,000. The total amount recorded as having been paid by furniture makers for work given out to other firms was £183,000, and the whole of the latter sum was probably paid to firms that made returns on schedules for the Furniture, etc., Trades and may, therefore, be taken to be included in the aggregate of £628,000.

There may also be some duplication in respect of furniture sold in a semi-finished or "white" condition, the polishing, staining and finishing stages being carried out by the purchasing firm, but the amount of duplication arising from this cause is probably not important. On the whole, it appears reasonable to estimate the total amount of duplication in the gross value of the output at about £1,400,000.

The total value of the output of the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades in 1924, free from duplication, may therefore be estimated at about £30,000,000.

Cost of materials and work given out.—The cost of materials used by firms that made their returns on schedules for the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades was returned as £14,835,000 in 1924, a sum which, by the exclusion of purchases of the products of other firms in the trade, is reduced to about £13,600,000.

The amount paid to other firms for work given out to them was returned as £183,000 in 1924, and £89,000 in 1907.

Net output.—The net output in 1924 of the firms that made their returns on schedules for the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades (whose gross output was valued at £31,425,000) was £16,407,000, that sum representing, without duplication, the total amount by which the value, as delivered, of the aggregate output exceeded the cost, as purchased, of the materials used and the amount paid to other firms for work given out to them.

The net output per head of persons employed (excluding out-workers) in the censal year 1924 was £196 and £83 in 1907.

Exports and imports.—Exports of furniture and cabinetware of wood in 1924 were valued at £1,317,000 and net imports at £563,000.

Wages in 1924.

Under the Census of Production Act, 1906, the powers of the Board of Trade to require information do not extend to particulars of the amount of wages paid, and, consequently, no information on this head was secured in connexion with the Census of 1924. As a result, however, of the voluntary enquiry undertaken by the Ministry of Labour into wages and hours in the United Kingdom in 1924, information was obtained as to the total wage-bill of a group of firms in the Furniture, Cabinet-making and Upholstery Trades that made returns both to the Ministry of Labour and to the Census of Production office. According to the Census records this group of firms employed, in the week ended 18th October, 1924, 31,987 operatives, or 44 per cent. of the total of 73,284 operatives for the trades as a whole, and their net output totalled £6,797,000, or 41 per cent. of the aggregate net output of £16,407,000 for the trades as a whole. The total wage-bill of these firms, as returned to the Ministry of Labour, was £3,991,000, representing about 59 per cent. of their aggregate net output.

Employment.

The detailed information relating to employment in 1924 is summarised in Table III on pages 120 and 121. The following table sets out certain particulars for that year together with those relating to the 1907 Census. For the purpose of this comparison, the average numbers of operatives of each sex returned for 1924 have been divided between the two age-groups in the proportions shown by the data relating to the week ended 18th October.

Average number (excluding outworkers).	Males.		Females.		Males and females.	
	Under 18.	All ages.	Under 18.	All ages.	Under 18.	All ages.
1924.						
Operatives	9,774	55,824	4,131	16,281	13,905	72,105
Administrative, etc. ..	390	9,778	350	2,014	740	11,792
TOTAL	10,164	65,602	4,481	18,295	14,645	83,897
1907.						
Wage earners	8,584	57,523	2,603	11,757	11,187	69,280
Salaried	498	6,315	120	820	618	7,135
TOTAL	9,082	63,838	2,723	12,577	11,805	76,415
Average number of outworkers:—						
1924	240		384		624	
1907	300		492		792	

Employment in 1924 improved throughout the year except for a slight set-back in August; the number of operatives at work was 2,540 below the average, in January, and 2,593 above the average, in December (see Table III B, page 121).

Mechanical Power.

The detailed information relating to mechanical power in 1924 is summarised in Table IV on page 122. The following table sets out the particulars for 1924 and 1907 relating to the capacity and kinds of *prime movers* and the capacity of *electric generators* installed.

Power equipment.	1924.			1907.
	Ordinarily in use.	In reserve or idle.	Total.	Total.
PRIME MOVERS:—	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.
Reciprocating steam engines ..	6,421	1,210	7,631	11,248
Steam turbines	1,085	—	1,085	35
Gas engines	9,125	578	9,703	9,868
Petrol and light oil engines ..	850	175	1,025	
Heavy oil engines	487	—	487	
Water power	202	—	202	887
TOTAL	18,170	1,963	20,133	22,038
ELECTRIC GENERATORS:—	Kw.	Kw.	Kw.	Kw.
Driven by—				
Reciprocating steam engines ..	1,787	349	2,136	1,885
Steam turbines	742	—	742	—
Gas engines	345	85	430	451
Petrol and light oil engines ..	85	65	150	
Heavy oil engines	15	—	15	
Water power	10	—	10	—
TOTAL	2,984	499	3,483	2,336

The capacity of *electric motors* recorded in 1924 was as shown below:—

Electric motors.	1924.		
	Ordinarily in use.	In reserve or idle.	Total.
Driven by—	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.
Electricity generated in own works	3,458	117	3,575
Purchased electricity	29,275	1,576	30,851

Corresponding information was not required for 1907. The total number of Board of Trade units of electricity purchased for power and lighting purposes in that year was returned as 2,200,246.

TABLES.

I.—Summary of results.

Particulars.	Unit.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.	Northern Ireland.
Value of goods made and work done (Gross output)	£'000	28,549	2,629	31,178	247
Cost of materials used	"	13,563	1,156	14,719	116
Paid for work given out to other firms	"	179	4	183	—
Net output	"	14,807	1,469	16,276	131
Average number of persons employed (excluding outworkers) ..	No.	74,581	8,457	83,038	859
Net output per person employed (excluding outworkers)	£	198	173	196	153
Mechanical power available :—					
Prime movers	H.P.	17,326	2,427	19,753	380
Electric motors driven by purchased electricity	"	27,734	3,043	30,777	74

II.—Production.

Goods sold or added to stock and work done.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.	Northern Ireland.
	Selling value.	Selling value.	Selling value.	Selling value.
	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.
Furniture of wood, upholstered or not upholstered	16,883	1,563	18,446	116
Cerements (shrouds, sidecovers, etc.) ..	*	*	95	†
Casement curtains and art furnishings ..	*	*	482	—
Beddings, cushions, quilts, etc. . . .	4,062	290	4,352	77
Blinds	517	57	574	6
Fittings for shops, offices, banks, churches, ships, etc., and architectural woodwork	1,918	204	2,122	†
Sofa and chair frames and other parts of furniture	604	54	658	†
Upholstery trimmings	419	13	432	—
Trouser and tie presses	92	—	92	—
Other articles of furniture	38	—	38	—
Bamboo and wicker furniture	*	*	58	—
Wire mattresses	517	48	565	†
Metal bedsteads	49	—	49	—
Coffins	73	4	77	2
Crates, cases and boxes	78	—	78	—
Other manufactures of wood	91	18	109	†
Other goods made	271	17	288	1
TOTAL VALUE OF GOODS MADE ..	26,185	2,318	28,503	214
Work done :—	Amount received.	Amount received.	Amount received.	Amount received.
Building work (mainly decorating) ..	39	7	46	—
Making up carpets, curtains, draperies, etc.	626	54	680	18
Repairs to furniture, cabinet work, etc.	1,123	207	1,330	6
Work done for the trade :—				
Polishing	259	20	279	1
Upholstery work	135	10	145	3
Other work	182	13	195	5
TOTAL VALUE OF WORK DONE ..	2,364	311	2,675	33
TOTAL VALUE OF GOODS MADE AND WORK DONE (GROSS OUTPUT) ..	28,549	2,629	31,178	247

* In order to avoid the possible disclosure of information relating to individual firms, figures are given only for Great Britain as a whole.

† In order to avoid the possible disclosure of information relating to individual firms, the figures for Northern Ireland have been combined with those for England and Wales and for Great Britain.

III.—Employment.

A.—NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN WEEK ENDED 18TH OCTOBER 1924
(EXCLUDING OUTWORKERS).

Kind of staff.	Males.		Females.		Males and females.	
	Under 18.	All ages.	Under 18.	All ages.	Under 18.	All ages.
<i>England and Wales</i> :—						
Operatives	9,154	50,862	3,738	14,262	12,892	65,124
Administrative, etc.*	355	8,779	310	1,711	665	10,490
TOTAL	9,509	59,641	4,048	15,973	13,557	75,614
<i>Scotland</i> :—						
Operatives	711	5,489	377	1,961	1,088	7,450
Administrative, etc.*	23	869	40	275	63	1,144
TOTAL	734	6,358	417	2,236	1,151	8,594
<i>Great Britain</i> :—						
Operatives	9,865	56,351	4,115	16,223	13,980	72,574
Administrative, etc.*	378	9,648	350	1,986	728	11,634
Total	10,243	65,999	4,465	18,209	14,708	84,208
<i>Northern Ireland</i> :—						
Operatives	92	513	45	197	137	710
Administrative, etc.*	12	130	—	28	12	158
TOTAL	104	643	45	225	149	868
<i>United Kingdom</i> :—						
TOTAL	10,347	66,642	4,510	18,434	14,857	85,076

* Administrative, technical and clerical staff.

B.—OPERATIVES EMPLOYED IN ONE WEEK IN EACH MONTH OF 1924
(EXCLUDING OUTWORKERS).*England & Wales.* (Annual average : Males, 49,957 ; Females, 14,134 ; Total 64,091.)

Week ended.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Week ended.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Jan. 12th ..	48,220	13,689	61,909	July 19th ..	49,524	14,174	63,698
Feb. 16th ..	48,520	13,626	62,146	Aug. 16th ..	49,283	13,838	63,121
March 15th ..	49,172	13,784	62,956	Sept. 13th ..	50,498	14,200	64,698
April 12th ..	49,918	14,082	64,000	Oct. 18th ..	50,862	14,262	65,124
May 17th ..	50,262	14,303	64,565	Nov. 15th ..	51,314	14,648	65,962
June 21st ..	50,268	14,279	64,547	Dec. 13th ..	51,638	14,728	66,366

Scotland. (Annual average : Males, 5,359 ; Females, 1,954 ; Total, 7,313.)

Jan. 12th ..	5,133	1,849	6,982	July 19th ..	5,392	1,993	7,385
Feb. 16th ..	5,164	1,857	7,021	Aug. 16th ..	5,396	1,941	7,337
March 15th ..	5,193	1,864	7,057	Sept. 13th ..	5,495	1,962	7,457
April 12th ..	5,241	1,952	7,193	Oct. 18th ..	5,489	1,961	7,450
May 17th ..	5,352	1,971	7,323	Nov. 15th ..	5,519	2,017	7,536
June 21st ..	5,365	2,033	7,398	Dec. 13th ..	5,574	2,043	7,617

Great Britain. (Annual average : Males, 55,316 ; Females, 16,088 ; Total, 71,404.)

Jan. 12th ..	53,353	15,538	68,891	July 19th ..	54,916	16,167	71,083
Feb. 16th ..	53,684	15,483	69,167	Aug. 16th ..	54,679	15,779	70,458
March 15th ..	54,365	15,648	70,013	Sept. 13th ..	55,993	16,162	72,155
April 12th ..	55,159	16,034	71,193	Oct. 18th ..	56,351	16,223	72,574
May 17th ..	55,614	16,274	71,888	Nov. 15th ..	56,833	16,665	73,498
June 21st ..	55,633	16,312	71,945	Dec. 13th ..	57,212	16,771	73,983

Northern Ireland. (Annual average : Males, 508 ; Females, 193 ; Total, 701.)

Jan. 12th ..	488	186	674	July 19th ..	444	173	617
Feb. 16th ..	510	187	697	Aug. 16th ..	531	203	734
March 15th ..	529	193	722	Sept. 13th ..	499	205	704
April 12th ..	526	188	714	Oct. 18th ..	513	197	710
May 17th ..	524	198	722	Nov. 15th ..	514	193	707
June 21st ..	501	200	701	Dec. 13th ..	519	196	715

C.—NUMBER OF OUTWORKERS AT TWO SPECIFIED PERIODS IN 1924.

Country.	January.			July.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
<i>England and Wales</i> ..	241	347	588	230	406	636
<i>Scotland</i>	5	5	10	3	5	8
<i>Great Britain</i>	246	352	598	233	411	644
<i>Northern Ireland</i> ..	—	3	3	—	3	3

IV.—Mechanical Power.

PARTICULARS OF PRIME MOVERS, ELECTRIC GENERATORS
AND ELECTRIC MOTORS.

(a) Ordinarily in use. (b) In reserve or idle.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.	Northern Ireland.
PRIME MOVERS :—				
	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.
Reciprocating steam engines { (a)	5,221	1,155	6,376	45
{ (b)	1,047	110	1,157	53
Steam turbines { (a)	1,025	60	1,085	—
Gas engines { (a)	8,000	957	8,957	168
{ (b)	525	53	578	—
Petrol and light oil engines { (a)	745	11	756	94
{ (b)	175	—	175	—
Heavy oil engines { (a)	485	2	487	—
Water power { (a)	103	79	182	20
TOTAL { (a)	15,579	2,264	17,843	327
{ (b)	1,747	163	1,910	53
TOTAL OF PRIME MOVERS INSTALLED	17,326	2,427	19,753	380
ELECTRIC GENERATORS :—				
	Kw.	Kw.	Kw.	Kw.
Driven by—				
Reciprocating steam engines { (a)	1,635	119	1,754	33
{ (b)	349	—	349	—
Steam turbines { (a)	742	—	742	—
Gas engines { (a)	320	15	335	10
{ (b)	69	16	85	—
Petrol and light oil engines { (a)	85	—	85	—
{ (b)	65	—	65	—
Heavy oil engines { (a)	15	—	15	—
Water power { (a)	—	—	—	10
TOTAL { (a)	2,797	134	2,931	53
{ (b)	483	16	499	—
TOTAL OF ELECTRIC GENERATORS INSTALLED	3,280	150	3,430	53
ELECTRIC MOTORS :—				
	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.	H.P.
Driven by—				
Electricity generated in own works { (a)	3,325	103	3,428	30
{ (b)	111	6	117	—
Purchased electricity { (a)	26,312	2,894	29,206	69
{ (b)	1,422	149	1,571	5