Manufacturing in Queensland during the 1920s

The 1920s proved to be a most difficult and challenging period for the manufacturing industries of Queensland as the economic dislocations associated with the war continued into that decade. For the most part, the manufacturing sector performed well during the first half of the decade but the peak in production, achieved in 1924, was not repeated again during the 1920s. External influences were primarily responsible for these economic dislocations, particularly the volatility of commodity markets in Europe, which had a dramatic impact on the value of Queensland’s processed primary produce and minerals exports. The strength of domestic demand for locally produced manufactures, stimulated by changes in consumer tastes and access to credit, drove the sector forward in the early part of the decade. Nevertheless, manufacturers faced several major problems. Skilled labour shortages, and the success of the labour movement in increasing wages through the arbitration award system, meant that, on average, wages were generally higher in Queensland than in New South Wales and Victoria. Higher wages, rates of taxation, and transport costs, together with its decentralised market and generally less than sufficient economies of scale, significantly increased the factor costs of production in Queensland, weakening the competitive position of local manufacturers when compared to interstate and overseas imports.

Opportunities to expand manufacturing production in Queensland, when market conditions were positive, were made more difficult by a financial services sector that was, at best, ambivalent towards manufacturing. In many cases Queensland’s financial institutions had little or no experience or desire to provide avenues of credit to any industry outside the pastoral and mercantile sectors. Moreover, the metals and machinery and building materials industries, which relied heavily upon government infrastructure spending suffered a weakening in demand as the government’s public works program was cut back in response to the 1920 to 1924 loans embargo. The resulting tight fiscal policy also affected many other manufacturing industries with the government’s refusal, or inability, to pay a premium and apply a preference for Queensland manufactures when awarding government contracts. The manufacturers received little by way of state assistance or encouragement, as successive Labor governments focused on developing the rural industries and establishing a wide range of state-owned enterprises. The assistance that was eventually offered by the conservative Moore government in 1929 proved to be too little and too late, and was effectively forestalled.
by the deepening shadows of the Great Depression. Despite this rather gloomy picture the manufacturers continued to survive. Indeed, many thrived under these trying circumstances and as a result had become very productive or innovative in responding to external competition.

Manufacturing in Australia and the Queensland Economy

The post-war expansion in Australia’s manufacturing industries is notable for a strong rate of growth that was shared broadly across the sector with somewhat higher than average rates of growth in power and energy generation and less than average growth in the building materials industry.\(^1\) During the 1920s global macro-economic factors hastened a world-wide process of mass industrialisation. Rural industries were restructured through advances in farming technology, much of which was labour saving, and surplus rural labour increased. Many urban and rural immigrants from Europe migrated to urban areas in the United States, New Zealand and Australia. Urban centres expanded rapidly together with urban unemployment. In Queensland, the Labor government believed closer settlement would solve the urban unemployment problem and was the best means with which to attract new immigrants. In other states in Australia more far-sighted governments believed rural development should be accompanied by the promotion of urban employment through industrial development. Unfortunately, the rural settlement schemes of the 1920s, much like previous attempts, were largely abject failures, and the mantle of economic development shifted by default on to the manufacturing sector.

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Chapter Seven

The embryonic trend toward import replacement, that arose out of wartime necessity, bloomed during the 1920s. The process of industrialisation in Australia was primarily based upon the establishment of import replacing industries, and the expansion of the food preparation, metals, clothing, footwear, and textiles sectors. The 1920s also heralded the onset of large-scale foreign investment in manufacturing in Australia, especially in the newer, more sophisticated industries. The trend towards industrialisation ‘... fitted into a world pattern and, to a considerable extent, industrial growth followed the transmission of innovations, foreign capital, and entrepreneurial skill in the new industries’. The most significant growth was centred on consumer durables and mass produced automobiles and automotive components. Moreover, the process of centralisation of manufacturing in New South Wales and Victoria accelerated during the 1920s with the number of factories in the former growing from 5460 to 8208 between 1919 and 1930, and from 5720 to 8195 in the latter. Employment in Australia’s factories increased from 395,425 in 1920 to 450,920 by 1925-26, and then declined to 336,658 by 1931. Overall, the number of factories in Australia climbed from 16,291 in 1920 to 22,700 by 1930, which demonstrates something of the scale of expansion in this sector and the process of industrialisation more generally.

Australia possessed several key advantages that enhanced its capacity to industrialise. The Commonwealth was reasonably active in the promotion of secondary industries through the Hughes government’s Greene Tariff of 1921, with production bounties to encourage new lines, and through a degree of preference in contracts applied to Australian manufacturers. The level and type of tariff protection, ambivalently administered by the notionally free-trade conservative Bruce-Page government (1923-1929), failed to satisfy the protective demands of the manufacturers. Nevertheless, without this support Australia’s industries would not have attracted the necessary inputs of foreign capital, labour and technology. Moreover, Australia

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already had a manufacturing base and a relatively developed economic framework which could facilitate an expansion. Australia’s industrial infrastructure was reasonably advanced with good transport linkages and a rapidly growing energy supply sector. Australia also possessed a rich resource base to exploit and an increasing market base that provided the stimulus to make the exploitation of these resources a viable proposition.

Table 7.1
Factories by States in Australia, 1900-1930

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<th>(B)QLD</th>
<th>(C)QLD</th>
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(A) QLD: Commonwealth figures for Queensland (1903-1908), includes all factories with two or more hands until and inclusive of 1905, and then for four or more hands from 1906 onwards. However, these figures do not include Government Railway Workshops prior to 1907. The QSS series records factories with two or more hands for the years 1900 to 1907, and then four or more hands thereafter. The Commonwealth figures initially record the number of factories in Queensland employing two or more hands from 1903 to 1905 inclusive, thereafter this series records only those factories employing four or more hands. The Commonwealth series (A) QLD and the QSS series overlap in 1906, 1907, and 1908.

(B) QLD: Estimates of Queensland factories adjusted to four or more hands from two or more hands from QSS series 1900-1907 by extrapolating the difference between the Commonwealth series (A) QLD and the QSS series for the years 1906-1908 to the years 1900-1905.

(C) QLD: F&SR Estimates of Queensland factories employing four or more hands. F&SR data indicates that the number of factories in Queensland employing less than four hands accounted for approximately 41 per cent of all Queensland factories. Therefore, factories with four or more hands could have accounted for approximately 59 per cent of the QSS total between 1900-1906.

* = These figures from the QSS column record the number of Queensland factories employing two or more hands between 1901-1907, the Commonwealth figures in the (A) QLD column record the number of factories in Queensland classified as employing four or more hands.

** = NSW: No figure for six months only (1914) due to change over to fiscal year from 1 July 1914 - 30 June 1915.

*** = Queensland Statistics census dates changed to fiscal year. E.g. 1, July 1924 - 30 June 1925.


However, Australia also faced several factors that limited the scope and scale of manufacturing growth. The Hughes and Bruce-Page governments both promoted rural development. W.M. Hughes, however, supported strong tariff protection in order to assist Australian manufacturing. Stanley Bruce was, on the other hand, at best a reluctant provider of tariff protection. Bruce’s ambivalence towards manufacturing came at a critical time for the development of the nation’s secondary industries. The post-war global surplus of industrial productive capacity meant that Australia faced intense overseas competition and its higher than average factor costs of production (wages and materials), further weakened its competitive position. Australia’s economic geography, demography, and patterns of trade,
meant that imported goods had easy access to the market concentrations in the coastal cites. Furthermore, local capital sources were underdeveloped and the financial services sector had little experience, or interest, in providing venture capital for manufacturing, since it was geared to financing the traditional ‘commercial-agricultural economy’.\(^7\)

A close examination of industrial statistics reveals that the process of industrialisation, generally thought to have begun during and after World War I, actually had its origins in the pre-war expansion. That is to say, what is significant about industrial growth in the 1920s is not so much the rate of industrial growth, but the degree of diversification and sophistication that occurred. The greatest advance in Australia’s industry base, the establishment of an integrated iron and steel industry, had been set in motion two years prior to the war.\(^8\) Another difference, and perhaps one of the most significant factors in the success of the manufacturing sector in the 1920s, was the socio-economic changes. In Australia consumer purchasing power grew steadily, allowing new levels of consumer spending. Innovations in personal finance, most importantly the introduction of hire purchase arrangements, also provided a critical market stimulus to Australian manufacturing. This, in part, explains why the expansion in Australia’s manufacturing sector was based on manufacturing consumer perishables and durables for domestic consumption and not the export trade.\(^9\)

In Queensland the pattern of development of the manufacturing sector at times followed the national trend and at other times followed its own unique course. The historiographical generalisations made about Australian manufacturing mostly reflect the performance of the sector in New South Wales and Victoria. The same can be said of general economic assessments. The main features of Queensland’s economic performance during the 1920s have been dealt with in some detail in Chapter Six, however, some elements that directly affect the state of the manufacturing sector need to be reiterated here. Queensland’s economy fared reasonably well until a slump in commodity prices began to retard the market in the latter half of the decade. Queensland failed to attract sufficient new capital investment, especially in the agricultural, mining, and manufacturing sectors, and the combination of several droughts and floods, lower commodity prices, high production costs and inflation, 

\(^{7}\) Forster, *Industrial Development*, p. 5.


were added burdens to an economy already saddled with a very high level of public debt. To help service this debt the Queensland government increased the level of existing taxes and introduced new ones, which further increased business costs in Queensland.

Inflation and the impact of this severe tax regime on the viability of manufacturers, a point often stressed by representatives of Queensland’s business community, has generally been overlooked by historians, and is an important causal factor in the lower level of industrial development experienced in Queensland. Avenues for raising capital through the stock market were restricted as, under the prevailing inflationary circumstances, investors were naturally attracted to high yield capital stable investments, such as bank term deposits and government securities, which performed well due to higher than average interest rates. As the decade unfolded, cautious small investors preferred the solid returns of government script, and it was only in the later years of the decade that they began to move back into industrial stocks as their yields improved. Under these circumstances there was clearly a deficit of capital available for manufacturing investment. Clearly the economic conditions of the period, especially in terms of increased factor costs and limited access to capital for investment, made the manufacturers’ lot a difficult one.


12 Lougheed, Brisbane Stock Exchange, pp. 98-100.
The Manufacturing Sector in Queensland 1920-1930: A Statistical Profile

Factories

The 1920s was a decade of mixed fortunes for Queensland’s secondary industries, but generally speaking there was positive growth for most of the decade despite the difficulties that had to be overcome. The Statistics indicate that the number of factories in operation during the 1920s increased steadily between 1919 and 1923, followed by a period of stagnation from 1924 and 1926, after which growth accelerated between 1927 and 1929, before the decline into the depression. There were 1795 factories (with four or more employees) operating in Queensland in 1920, and this number had increased to 1912 by 1923. The number of factories stagnated below 1900 between 1924 and 1926, before surging to 2172 in 1929, and settling at 2104 by 1930.\(^\text{13}\) The ‘F&SR’ figures suggest a much stronger and more consistent growth trend throughout the decade with a surge from 1925 onwards. The ‘F&SR’ tables show 3292 registered factories in 1920, 3915 in 1925, and 4411 by 1930 (see Fig. 7.1 and Fig. 7.2).\(^\text{14}\) Here again the ‘F&SR’ returns suggest a significantly larger and more dynamic manufacturing sector was evident in the 1920s than is apparent in the Statistics figures.

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The growth in the number of factories was experienced across the entire sector, although the scope and scale of growth varied between industries. Factories classified with fewer than four employees increased steadily, except in 1921, 1923, and 1925. In 1920 there were 319 factories in this group, 350 in 1925, and 468 by 1930. In the 4-10 employee factory size group where there were 722 factories in 1920 (775 in 1921), growth was also steady up to 1925, but the number stagnated at around 700 between 1925 and 1927, and then increased rapidly to 886 by 1930. The next group (11-20 hands) experienced growth right through to 1927, with
326 factories in 1920 and a peak of 384 in 1926, and then stabilised with 377 factories in 1930. The 21-50 employee group remained relatively stable between 1920 (256 factories) and 1923 (268), before increasing to 282 in 1927, followed by a fall to 258 factories by 1930. The 51-100 group slumped from 80 to 66 factories between 1920 and 1921, recovered to reach a peak of 99 by 1928, and then began to decrease to 93 factories by 1930. In the last classification, those factories with 101 or more hands, steady growth was recorded between 1920 and 1926 (92 to 109 factories), then stabilised before declining to 90 factories by 1930. These figures demonstrate that generally the smaller firms employing between one and ten employees experienced more consistent growth, those with eleven to fifty employees grew to 1926-27 and then stalled or declined somewhat. The 51-100 group experienced growth only in the middle of the decade, whereas the 101 plus group demonstrates a similar trend to that of the 11-50 groups.15

Table 7.2
QSS Factories Classified by Number of Employees, 1920-1930

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<td>701</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Employment

Employment in the manufacturing industries fluctuated during the 1920s, with a strong increase between 1922 and 1925, coming off a mild slump between 1920 (43,200) and 1921 (42,250). Employment peaked at 50,500 in 1925, fell to 47,480 in 1927, increased marginally to 48,280 in the following year, and slumped again to 40,470 by 1930 (see Fig. 7.3). The ‘F&SR’ figures reflect a similar trend in employment from 32,714 (1920) to 39,517 (1930), with a peak of 42,057 in 1926. The number of male employees recorded in the Statistics increased from 36,011 in 1920 to 37,994 by 1930 (83.4 per cent of the total workforce), and female employment also increased from 7185 to 8125 between 1920 and 1930 (see Fig. 7.4, Fig. 7.5a and Fig. 7.5b). While male employment increased by only 5 per cent, female employment actually increased by 13 per cent over the decade. The Census records indicate a significantly higher number of persons employed in manufacturing (not including building and construction), increasing from 47,690 to 54,930 between 1921 and 1933. During the 1920s the proportion of females employed in Queensland also increased significantly: from 21.4 per cent of the total workforce in 1921 to 27.9 per cent by 1933. This increase was, however, somewhat inflated by the high level of male unemployment at the time when the 1933 Census was taken. Census figures indicate that females comprised 20.1 per cent and 21.2 per cent of the manufacturing workforce in 1921 and 1933 respectively. Compared to these figures the percentage range of female manufacturing employees in the Statistics records was 16.6 per cent and 17.6 per cent, and for the ‘F&SR’, 26.1 per cent and 25.8 per cent for 1920 and 1930 respectively. The Census figures reveal female manufacturing employment increasing from 10,008 to 11,625 (1921 and 1933), the Statistics from 7185 to 8125, and the ‘F&SR’ female totals from 8547 to 10,206 between 1920 and 1930. The higher proportion of female employees shown in the ‘F&SR’ and the Census might reflect the depth and nature of manufacturing activities that fall outside the Statistics classifications, for example, in manufacturing linked to a wholesale or retail outlet where females were most

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18 Table LI, QSS, QPP, 3 (1919-20), pp. 40-1k & LII, QSS, QPP, 2 (1930), pp. 63-66h.
prominently employed.  

Chapter Seven

7.3 Manufacturing Employment 1920-1930

Source: "Summary - Factories", QSS, OPP, 1 (1931), pp. 20-1K.

7.4 M/F Factory Employment 1920-1931

Source: "Manufacturing Vocational Status Tables", QSS (1921-1931)

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7.5a Factory Employment by Major Industries 1920

Source: QSS, QPP, 2 (1921), pp. 40-41.

7.5b Factory Employment by Major Industries 1930


Production
Production figures for the manufacturing demonstrate that the total value of output (the wholesale value of manufactures) at first declined from £40 million in 1920 to £37.8 million in 1922. However, this was followed by a surge in production to a peak of £49.1 million in 1924. Output then fluctuated from £41.3 million in 1926, to £47.6 million in 1928, and to £40.4 million by 1930. The value of production (the crude value added by manufacturing) increased from £11.7 million in 1920, to peak at £18.8 million in 1924 (an increase of 60 per cent), and then also fluctuated — from £16.5 million (1926), to £18.3 million (1927) and to £14.9 million in 1930 (see Fig. 7.6). Some progress was made in the value of plant and machinery used in manufacturing in Queensland, which grew from £9.6 million in 1920, to £16 million by 1926, peaked at £16.7 million in 1928, before stagnating to the early 1930s.

Intra-sectoral performance varied widely. The fluctuating results in the Treating Raw Materials (TRM) group were counter-balanced by a generally positive performance in exports from this group. Production in the Earthen Building Materials (EBM) group grew in the first half of the decade and then declined, along with the building and construction trades, which was also the case for the Working in Wood (WW) group. In the Metals and Machinery (M&M) group results were mixed, but, in general, the sector did not suffer the post-1925 slump to the same degree as many of the other groups. In the Food and Drink (F&D) group conditions also varied wildly. Export-based production, however, experienced more volatile conditions, and production for local consumption remained relatively positive during most of the decade. In the Clothing, Footwear, and Textiles (CFT) group both footwear and clothing trades performed well until 1924, and then stagnated or declined through to 1930. Steady growth was experienced in the Printing, Books, and Binding (PBB) group despite a reduction in employment after 1925. In the Coaches, Wagons, and Motor Vehicles (CWMV) group the motorised trades expanded rapidly at the expense of the more traditional waggon, coach, and harness trades (see Fig. 7.7). Here the impact of the introduction of new technology not only revolutionised how products were produced, but also the type of product. In the Furniture and Bedding (F&B) group production in furniture, cabinets, bedding and upholstery all increased steadily.


It is important to note that the strong growth in the value of production and output is somewhat overstated in these figures. Inflation and wages growth added considerably to the costs of production, which tends to distort the real gains made in productive output. For example, A. Watson, the President of the QCM, disputed Premier Theodore’s use of per capita increases in the value of production as evidence of the progress made in the manufacturing sector in Queensland. Watson claimed that of the increase of £10 million in the value of production (1918-1922) cited by Theodore in Parliament in 1924, £5 million was due to increased costs of raw materials, and another £2 million was caused by wage rises. Nonetheless, taking into account the rise in factor costs and inflation, and considering the real growth in the value of plant and machinery, the growth in production was still quite strong during most of the decade. It is also important to remember that the Queensland economy was not by any means an homogenous one and the performance of the various manufacturing sectors varied across the state in response to climatic variables, local market conditions, and intra and interstate, and international trade.

Industrial Geography and Distribution of Employment

One of the main features of Australia’s demography in the 1920s was the rapid growth of populations residing in urban centres. This trend was also evident in Queensland. It was during this period that urbanisation began to arrest rural intensification in Queensland, the latter having usurped the former in demographic trends from the early 1890s. The trends of urbanisation and urban growth, and the expansion in manufacturing activity, also represents a shift in the dominant trade and industry location cycles. While the dominance of primary commodity exports was maintained, there occurred a simultaneous expansion of domestically generated demand for local manufactures, which eclipsed previous growth trends. Here the balance between the export demand and capital (human and financial) and manufacture imports shifted as the latter became less important and the domestic market stimulus became more significant. It can be argued therefore, that the Decentralised Commodity Export Cycle Model was less applicable by the mid 1920s than it had been for the previous decades. Here the concepts associated with Central Place theory, where the urban nucleus (for example, Brisbane) is understood as providing the impetus for surrounding rural development and

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therefore the location of industries, assumes a significance similar to those of Urban Base theory and the Centre-Periphery Model.  

During the 1920s people became increasingly attracted to urban life because it offered new employment opportunities, generally higher wages and better working conditions than in rural vocations, and social amenities were of a better quality and more accessible. The Statistics indicate that Queensland’s mean population grew by 25.7 per cent between 1920 and 1930 and Census data demonstrates an increase of 25.3 per cent between 1921 and 1933. Census data also indicates that the population residing in towns and other urban centres increased by 51.2 per cent, while those living in shires and rural areas increased only by 5.2 per cent. It was during the 1920s that Queensland’s urban population once again overtook the number of people living in rural locations. The number of people living in towns and cities increased from 329,870 (1921) to 498,892 (1933) while those residing in the rural shires grew from 421,189 (1921) to 443027 (1933). The rate of population expansion was not, however, experienced universally. Both the Southern and Northern Divisions experienced population increases in excess of 30 per cent, whereas in the Central Division there was a net reduction in population, down by 10.2 per cent between 1921 and 1933. Most of the reduction in population in central Queensland occurred in the rural areas as families left farms associated with failed closer settlement schemes in the region. Rockhampton, on the other hand, experienced a 24 per cent growth in its population between 1920 and 1930. The greatest growth rate occurred in Townsville (48.9 per cent), followed by Gympie (47 per cent), Mackay (46 per cent), Cairns (30.7 per cent), Ipswich (27.8 per cent), Toowoomba (26.3 per cent), Bundaberg (21.3 per cent), and Maryborough (12.8 per cent). Charters Towers experienced a decline of 3.2 per cent in its population because of the decline in gold mining.

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24 I.H. Burnley, *The Australian Urban System*, pp. 55-59. Central Place Theory contends that the urban nucleus (e.g. Brisbane) provides the impetus for surrounding rural development. Urban Base Theory, on the other hand, emphasises the impact of rural export oriented (as well as domestic generation) activities as being a key factor in promoting urban growth and economic development. The Centre-Periphery Model ‘... integrates demand and supply oriented approaches within a historical and institutional framework’, and emphasises in-flows of labour and capital over base export demand.


The positive trend in urban population growth is an important linkage to the growth of manufacturing during the early and mid-1920s, particularly in the south and the north of the state. The expansion in trade through Brisbane and the south-east was primed by increases in local domestic demand related to urban population growth. The success of sugar and other rural production linked to processing activities underwrote much of the urban growth around the ports in the north. Indeed, the heterogeneous nature of Queensland’s economy, and the strength and relative independence of its regional economies, are demonstrated in the growth patterns of manufacturing enterprises and employment in regional centres. The *Statistics* indicates that of the 1795 factories recorded in 1920, 592 were located in the Brisbane metropolitan region, followed by Toowoomba (95), Rockhampton (94), Maryborough (61), Ipswich (59), Townsville (57), Gympie (51), Bundaberg (40), Mackay (39), Warwick (30), and Charters Towers (26), with 651 factories located ‘Elsewhere’ around the state. By 1930 there were 2104 factories in Queensland, and several changes had occurred in the lower order. The number of factories in Brisbane grew to 760, followed by Toowoomba (97), Rockhampton (90), Maryborough (61), and Ipswich (56), with Gympie (49) overtaking Townsville (47), Mackay (42) exceeding Bundaberg and Warwick (38), and Charters Towers (21), with 805 factories located ‘Elsewhere’. Several towns experienced peak factory numbers between 1922 and 1924, including Bundaberg (44), Ipswich (64), Rockhampton (106), and Townsville (61). The remainder had peaks between 1927 and 1930; Brisbane (814), Charters Towers (27), Gympie (61), Mackay (43), Maryborough (64), Toowoomba (107), Warwick (38), and ‘elsewhere’ (805) (see Fig. 7.8 and Fig. 7.9).29


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### 7.8 QSS Factories by District 1920-1930

Source: "Factories by District Tables", QSS, (1921-1931)

### 7.9 QSS Metropolitan Factories 1920-1930

- **Brisbane (Metro)**
- **Elsewhere**
**Table 7.3**

QSS Factories Classified by District, 1920-1930

Key: Petty Sessions Districts - Metro [Metropolitan], Bundy [Bundaberg], CT [Charters Towers], M'boro [Maryborough], Rocky [Rockhampton], Twba [Toowoomba], T'vile [Townsville], & W'rick [Warwick].

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<th>M'boro</th>
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</table>

7.10 Factory Distribution By Division 1920
Percentage of Qld factories in each division. OSS, QPP, 2 (1921), pp. 40-1k.

7.11 Factory Distribution by Division 1930
Percentage of Qld factories in each division. OSS, 1930-31, pp. 86-91.
An estimate of the distribution of factories by Division can be made by scaling the relative proportions of factories to the employment figures drawn from the ‘industrial’ workforce as classified by Division in the 1921 and 1933 Censuses. Of the 1795 factories recorded in 1920, approximately 1264 could have been located in the Southern Division, and this may have increased to 1529 by 1930. In the Central Division the number of factories may have grown from 288 to 315 between 1920 and 1930, with factories in the Northern Division also expanding from 243 to 260 over the period (see Fig. 7.10 and Fig. 7.11). As a percentage, these estimates suggest that factories located in the Southern Division increased to almost 53.5 per cent of all factories in Queensland. A short series on manufacturing employment in the Brisbane metropolitan area is available for 1924-1930. In 1924-25, the 684 factories in Brisbane (representing 36.2 per cent of the factories in Queensland) employed 23,008 workers, or 47 per cent of the state’s total manufacturing workforce. By 1929-30 Brisbane’s 814 factories (37.5 per cent of the state total), accounted for 20,797 workers, or 45 per cent of the state total. The mild trend of factory centralisation in the Brisbane metropolitan area intensified as its share of the state’s factories increased from 33 per cent to 37 per cent between 1920 and 1930. Brisbane had accounted for 26 per cent of the state’s factories in 1900.

The figures above also demonstrate that the process of consolidation was most pronounced in Brisbane, as its employee per factory ratio in 1929-30 was 25.5, which was greater than the state average of 21.2.30 Accurate estimates of Brisbane’s metropolitan area population are not available prior to 1922, but in that year it was estimated that there were 233,404 residents in Greater Brisbane, or 29.8 per cent of the state’s mean population. By 1930 Brisbane’s population was 313,251, or 33.3 per cent of the mean total (940,000).31 Taking all this into account, it can be concluded that Brisbane’s share of manufacturing activity was, in fact, not much greater than its relative share of the state’s population. This indicates that, while there was a mild trend in centralisation of manufacturing production in Brisbane, which intensified during the 1920s, this was largely offset by growth in decentralised manufacturing production elsewhere in the state in response to prevailing regional market conditions and the diverse economic geography of the state.

Regional diversity is highlighted in the Census data available for manufacturing and

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30 ‘Brisbane - Factories’, *ABCQS*, 1927, p. 92; 1928, p. 91; 1929, p. 111; 1930, p. 120; 1931, p. 131. & 1932, p. 137.
construction (industrial)\textsuperscript{32} employment as classified by the three Divisions in Queensland. In 1921 industrial employment accounted for 26.5 per cent of the state’s total workforce; this had increased marginally to 27.2 per cent by 1930. The Censuses indicate that in southern Queensland, 32.8 per cent of the entire workforce was engaged in industrial occupations in 1921, 19.6 per cent in central Queensland, and 26.3 per cent in the north. By 1930 the south had increased its share slightly to 33.6 per cent, and while this was also the case in central Queensland (20 per cent), there was a slight reduction in north Queensland to 24.7 per cent.\textsuperscript{33} Utilising these percentages as a guide, it is estimated that of the 43,200 manufacturing workers recorded in the \textit{Statistics} in 1920, perhaps 22,333 could have been located in the Southern Division, 12,842 in the Central Division, and 8025 in the Northern Division. Manufacturing employment peaked at 50,496 in 1925, with approximately 26,560 workers in the Southern Division, 14,541 in the Central Division, and 9395 in the Northern Division. By 1930 the distribution may have been 21,638 (SD), 11,290 (CD), and 7542 (ND), of a total of 40,470. As a percentage of the total manufacturing workforce, the Southern Division increased its share from 51.7 per cent to 52.6 per cent (compared to 46.1 per cent in 1901), the Northern Division remained static at around 18.6 per cent (21.2 per cent in 1901), while there was a decrease in the Central Division from 29.7 per cent to 27.9 per cent (32.7 per cent in 1901) between 1920 and 1930.\textsuperscript{34} Comparing this to the relative percentages in 1901, the Southern Division had increased its share of the manufacturing workforce by 6.5 per cent between 1901 and 1930, while the Central Division had decreased by 4.8 per cent and the Northern Division by 2.6 per cent. In broad terms these figures show that the degree of centralisation in manufacturing the south of the state was quite marginal when one considers that the trend in demographic centralisation as the population in the south grew by almost 90 per cent between the 1901 and 1933 Censuses, whereas the north of the state experienced a 61 per cent gain and central Queensland 24 per cent. The Southern Division increased its share of the total population from 57.7 per cent to 72.7 per cent between 1901 and 1933, while the Central Division fell from 15.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent, and the Northern Division from 26.8 per cent to 18.8 per cent of Queensland’s population.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} All people working in ‘Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas, Building and Construction [MEGBC]’ are sub-divided into South, Central and Northern Divisions.


\textsuperscript{34} ‘Summary’, QSS, \textit{QPP}, 1, (1931), p. 20k.

\textsuperscript{35} Lewis, \textit{History of the Ports}, p. 282.
As previously noted, a degree of centralisation of factories occurred in Brisbane, but more significantly, the average size of factories in Brisbane, classified by number of employees, was greater than anywhere else in the state, with the notable exception of Ipswich. ‘F&SR’ figures show that the average size of a factory in Queensland increased from 10 hands per factory in 1920 to a peak of 11 hands in 1926. In Brisbane the average initially increased from 13.1 to 13.9 hands (1925), and then declined to 11.8 hands per factory by 1930. Surprisingly, the largest employee per factory average occurred in Ipswich, with an average of 20.1 in 1920, which peaked at 20.3 (1925) and then declined to 14.6 by 1930. Ipswich’s position is accounted for by the large and labour intensive engineering and rail workshops that were located there. Ipswich and Brisbane were followed by Rockhampton with an employees per factory average of nine in 1920 and 1926, and six in 1930; Townsville, 8 to 7.4 (with peaks of 11.4 in 1921 and 1923); Maryborough, 7.8 to 6.3 (peak of 10 in 1928); Bundaberg, 7 to 4.5 (peak in 1920); Toowoomba, which increased from 6.2 to 7; Cairns, 5.2 to 4.5 (peak of 5.3 in 1924); Charters Towers, 4.8 to 2.6 (peak 1920); Mackay, 3 to 3.9 (peak of 5.8 in 1928); and Warwick, 2.8 to 3.9 (peak 1930). Dalby, Gympie, and Mt Morgan had averages of fewer than four hands per factory. These figures show that the bigger urban centres had, on average, larger factories. However, this tends to mask the fact that the geographically dispersed meat works, sugar mills, and smelters were large employers, although the meat works and sugar mills were seasonal employers. Indeed, the growth or decline in factory numbers and employment varied widely across the state by classification, and also by the type of manufacturing processes included in the broad classifications.

Intra-Sectoral Performance in the Manufacturing Sector

Table 7.4

QSS Factories by Group Classification, 1920-1931

**Key:** Factories with four or more employees. TRM [Treating Raw Materials], EBM [Earthen Building Materials], WW [Working in Wood], M&M [Metals & Machinery], F&D [Food & Drink Preparation], CFT [Clothing, Footwear, & Textiles], BPP [Books, Printing, & Paper], CWMV [Coaches, Wagons, Motor Vehicles], F&B [Furniture & Bedding], HLP [Heat, Light, & Power], and S&O [Specialised & Other]

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<th>M&amp;M</th>
<th>F&amp;D</th>
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<th>BPP</th>
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<td>690</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Treating Raw Materials (TRM):

(This group includes bonemills, tanneries, woolscouring and fellmongering works.)

The decline in the number of factories in this group that was evident during the war and continued through the 1920s, decreasing from fifty-seven in 1920 to forty-seven by 1930. Woolscourers and fellmongeries remained stable at eighteen between 1920 and 1925, and then decreased to a low of thirteen by 1930. The number of tanneries declined steadily from seventeen to fourteen between 1920 and 1930, while bone mills remained relatively stable with nine in 1920 and eight in 1930. Soap and candle works decreased from thirteen to ten over the period. Employment in this group did, however, continue to expand steadily during the 1920s, from 901 to 1011, with a peak of 1062 in 1926 (see Fig. 7.12 and Fig. 7.13). Woolscouring and fellmongering employed 387 in 1920, reached a peak of 421 in 1926, and fell to 419 by 1930. Employment in the tanneries also increased from 265 in 1920 to a high of 336 in 1926, but suffered a sustained decline to 268 by 1930. Employment in the bone mills increased from 78 to a peak of 103 in 1928, while soap and candle works employment also grew from 171 to a peak of 247 in 1923, before settling back to 190 by 1930. The average number of employees per factory in this group increased from 15.8 to 21.5 between 1920 and 1930, reflecting the degree of consolidation in this industry. In woolscouring and fellmongering the average climbed from 21.5 (1920) to 32.2 (1930); in the tanneries from 15.6 (1920) to 19.1 (1930); bone mills from 8.6 to 10.6; and soap and candle works from 13.2 to 19 employees per factory.

The value of woolscouring and fellmongering production in 1920 was £2.3 million, which declined rapidly to just £1.3 million in the following year. However, after growing to a peak of £3.4 million in 1924-25, production again regressed to the 1921 figure from 1926 onwards, and had collapsed to around £800,000 by 1930. The manufacture of lard increased from 474,426 lbs in 1920 to 1 million lbs by 1930. The production of leather hides initially increased, from 2.8 million lbs in 1920 to a peak of 4.2 million lbs in 1923. This period was followed by a period of stagnation and finally decline to a low of 2.4 million lbs in 1930.37

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37 Unless noted otherwise the sources for the analysis in the ‘Inter-sectoral performance’ section are as follows:
The trend in the value of exports from this group continued to be positive until 1927, growing from £9.9 million in 1920 to £14.4 million by 1926. This was followed, however, by a more negative performance as exports dived to £7.7 million by 1930.\(^{38}\)

2. Earthen Building Materials (EBM):

Chapter Seven

(This group includes the manufacture of bricks and tiles, concrete pipes, ornamental glass, lime, plaster, cement, marble masonry, pottery and earthenware.)

There was clear post-war recovery in the EBM group with the number of factories increasing from forty-two to fifty between 1920 and 1930 (see Fig. 7.14 and Fig. 7.15). A serious shortage of cement and bricks affected the Queensland building trades in 1920, exacerbated by the failure of the Master Builders’ Association brick plant at Newmarket due to inferior clay, and a simultaneous shortage of timber.\textsuperscript{39} Brick and tile works remained stable at seventeen, while marble and monumental masonry works continued to decrease, from eleven (1920) to eight (1930). The number of potteries increased slightly from four to five. The greatest increase occurred in lime, plaster and cement works, which grew from four to twelve. Two new classifications added to the growth pattern of this group, with four concrete pipe works and six glassworks coming on line during the middle of the decade.

Not surprisingly, employment in this group increased, from 940 to a peak of 1012 in 1925, then declined to 926 by 1930. Brick and tile works continued to dominate employment in this group, with 450 in 1920, but numbers had declined to 415 by 1930. Employment in the lime, plaster and cement works increased from 115 to a high of 209 in 1924, and stabilised at 194 by 1930. In concrete pipe manufacture employment stood at around eighty to ninety, and in the sixties in glassworks. The average number of employees per factory for the group was 22.4 in 1920, and had declined to 18.5 by 1930. For the brick and tile works the average declined marginally from 26.5 to 26, and in the lime, plaster, and cement classification the average also decreased from 28.7 to 16.2 by 1930. The average in potteries dropped from 14.2 to 9, and in the glass works from 15 to 11 over the period. However, it must be noted that the reduction in the number of factories and employment occurred in the latter years of the decade and reveals something of the impact that the post-1927 recession had on the building and construction trades.

In terms of production, the limited data available indicates that brick production increased from 16.2 million bricks, after a slump to 10.3 million in 1921, to a peak of 24.7 million in 1925-26, and then collapsed back to 15.2 million by 1930. The value of pottery production also increased at first, from £63,500 in 1920, to a peak of £77,200 in 1925-26 before

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\textsuperscript{39} Premier’s Department, Letter from the Building Trades Council to Acting Premier Gillies, 25 June 1920, PRE/A664, 5750, QSA.
plummeting to £27,800 in 1930.

3. Working in Wood (WW):
(This group includes the manufacture of boxes, cases, timber products, plywood, and cooperages, joineries, sawmills, wood-turning and carving.)

The number of factories involved in the wood-working industry improved from 304 to 339
between 1920 and 1930. Post-war economic conditions were mostly favourable to the timber materials trades, as they also were for the EBM trades. Sawmills recovered from the wartime doldrums, increasing from 233 to a peak of 256 (1925), and settled back to 246 (1930). The joineries were kept busy by an increase in timber housing construction, growing from forty-five to sixty-seven. The number of cooperages also grew, from ten to eleven, as did box and case making (8 to 9), and plywood and other works remained stable at eight, after a drop to four in 1925 (see Fig. 7.16 and Fig. 7.17).

Employment in this group surged through to 1926, from 5377 to 5730. This number, however, declined to 5341 as the building slump and the depression began to take hold. Employment in the sawmills dominated this group, initially growing from 4306 to 4464 between 1920 and 1925, before falling off to 3960 by 1930. In the joineries the picture was similar, where employment improved from 683 to 1013 by 1927, and then faltered to 908 by 1930. Employment in box and case making slowly decreased, but when grouped in the tables with plywood and other trades, this group grew from 312 to 356 over the decade. The average number of employees per factory in the WW group declined from 17.7 to 15.7 over the decade. In sawmilling, the average decreased from 18.5 to 16, as did the joineries’ average from 15.2 to 14.8 between 1920 and 1930. In the cooperages, however, the average actually increased from 7.6 to 8.4 employees per factory.

Timber production figures show the relative strength of the pre-1927 trading conditions as cedar output surged from 194,100 super feet (s.f.) to 432,850 s.f. by 1924-25, but this surge was followed by a steep decline to just 177,400 s.f. by 1930. Similarly, the production of hardwood increased from 50.5 million s.f. in 1920 to a high 60 million s.f. in 1924-25, before falling to less than 30 million s.f. by 1930. The output of softwood, on the other hand, remained flat at around 83-85 million s.f. to 1924-25 and then, like hardwood, collapsed to 30 million s.f. by 1930. Timber exports fluctuated wildly from a low of £1418 in 1920, to £5949 (1925), £112,194 (1929), and to £79,672 in 1930.40

40 ‘Tables - Exports Oversea, Queensland (by type)’, ABCQS, 1921, p. 33; 1923, pp. 74-7; 1924, p. 110-1; 1925, pp. 166-7; 1926, pp. 166-7; 1927, pp. 192-3; 1928, pp. 190-1; 1929, pp. 216-7; 1930, pp. 228-9; 1931, pp. 238-9; & 1932, pp. 248-9.
4. Metals and Machinery (M&M):
(This group includes the manufacture of agricultural implements, stoves and ovens, nails, brass and copper works, engineering works and foundries, galvanised iron and iron works, rail and tramway workshops, metal extraction and smelting, blacksmithing, tinsmithing, and sheet metal works, wire working, gas fitting, shipbuilding and repair, and electrical appliances.)
The metal industry experienced mixed conditions during the 1920s, with a general expansion in activity between 1920 and 1924, followed by a mid-decade slump and then a recovery in the latter part of the decade. The number of factories in this group increased from 229 to 232 between 1920 and 1924, fell to 199 in 1925, and then increased to 207 by 1930. Skills shortages and intense interstate and overseas competition cut back the potential for expansion in this sector. Engineering and ironworks posted a steady growth pattern from thirty-eight to forty-four between 1920 and 1930. The tinsmithing and sheet metal works numbered thirty-seven in 1920, and remained relatively stable with thirty-nine by 1930. Galvanising works (listed separately from tinsmith and sheetmetal works from the early 1920s) decreased from thirty-seven to twenty-four in the second half of the decade. The number of foundrys increased from fifteen to twenty after 1925 (see Fig. 7.18 and Fig. 7.19). Other groups also posted increases, including rail and tram workshops (12 to 14), brass and copper works (8 to 10), stoves (6 to 7), and then new classifications appearing in the series, such as wire works (0 to 11), electrical appliances (0 to 7), cutlery making (0 to 5), nail and gas meter makers (1 each). Conditions were not as positive elsewhere, with decreases in the number of smelters (12 to 7), agricultural implement making works (6 to 5), and ship builders (9 to 6).

Employment in the metals group was more positive than is suggested by the trend in factory numbers. Employment growth was quite strong, increasing from 7829 in 1920 to a peak of 9061 in 1926. Growth then stalled and declined somewhat to 8055 by 1930. Industry specific employment data for this group, however, is limited in all the industries, except smelting and shipbuilding, employment increased consistently from 6480 to 7874 between 1920 and 1930. Smelting works employed a significant number in the early part of the decade, with 1229 hands in 1920, but as the mining sector spiralled into decline, employment in smelting collapsed to fewer than half the 1920 numbers by 1925, and to a paltry 56 hands by 1930. The scale of the collapse in this sector was such that it was primarily responsible for the slump in employment in the group in the second half of the decade. Employment in shipbuilding also declined, but it occurred at a much slower rate than in smelting, with its 120 employees in 1920 falling to 89 by 1925, and then recovering to 98 by 1930.
The contrast between declining factory numbers and increased employment is evidence of the continuation of the trend of consolidation in this sector. The average number of employees per factory for the entire group firmed from 34.2 to 38.9 between 1920 and 1930, compared with 1900 when the average had been 12.4 employees per factory. The collapse in smelting is startlingly obvious; the employee average fell from 102.4 to just 11.8, whereas the shipbuilding and repair average firmed from 13.3 to 16.3 over the decade. While figures
specific to production values in this sector are not available, the total value of production (crude value added by manufacturing process) for the group increased from £2.7 million in 1920 to £4 million between 1922 and 1926, and then fell to £3.7 million in 1929-30 and £2.6 million by 1930-31.

5. Food and Drink (F&D):
(This group includes bacon curing, butter and cheese making, creameries, condensed milk, meat preserving, arrowroot, bakeries and biscuits, confectionery, flourmills, jam, fruit and vegetable canning, sugarmills and sugar refineries, aerated waters, breweries, condiments, coffee, distilleries, ice and refrigeration, malting.)

The F&D group continued to be the largest and most significant of the manufacturing sectors in Queensland during the 1920s. Factory numbers increased consistently for most of the decade; rising from 467 in 1920 to 693 by 1929, and stabilising at 678 in 1930 (see Fig. 7.20 and Fig. 7.21). Bakeries had the highest numbers in this group, increasing from 210 to 220 between 1920 and 1930. Factories manufacturing aerated waters were next with 136 in 1920, peaking at 156 in 1929, before falling slightly to 145 by 1930. Butter and cheese factories and creameries followed; butter factories remained largely stable in the mid-fifties, while cheese factories declined from eighty-two to sixty-three over the decade. The fall in the number of cheese factories was partly due to regulations introduced under the *Dairy Produce Act 1921* that forced smaller factories to close due to the cost of installing refrigeration plants, and which led to the centralisation of production and storage of cheese.\(^{41}\) Sugar mills and refineries remained fairly stable in the mid- to high thirties. Ice and refrigeration works increased rapidly, in line with the expansion in industrial access to electric power, rising from forty-six to seventy-six during the period. Biscuit and cake manufacturing maintained its lead over jam, fruit, and vegetable canning, increasing its number from twenty to twenty-seven, while the latter slowly declined from seventeen to twelve between 1920 and 1930. Meat preserving also showed a negative result, with works numbers decreasing from thirteen to nine. Confectionery works improved their position, up from eight to twelve, while breweries consolidated their numbers from ten to nine factories.

Employment growth in this group occurred at about half the rate of expansion in factory numbers during this period, which would suggest a greater increase in the number of small-scale factories such as bakeries and iceworks. Employment grew steadily from 13,725 in 1920 to 15,691 in 1925, and to a peak of 16,683 by 1930. The trend in expansion of smaller
factories can be seen in the reduction in the average number of employees per factory for the group, from 29.4 to 24.6 over the decade. The largest employers in the group were the sugar mills which experienced a steady increase in employment in the first half of the decade, from 5228 to 6077 (1925), followed by a slight reduction to 6077 (1930). The meat preserving industry mirrored the trend in the sugar industry, with growth from 3780 to 3886 (1925), followed by a decline to 3317 by 1930. While the sugar mills (as a group) employed more hands, the meat works were the largest individual employers, with an employee per factory average increasing from 290 to 368 between 1920 and 1930. The average employee per factory figure in the sugar mills increased from 145.2 to 164.2 over the same period. The pattern of consolidation in these two industries is quite obvious from these figures.

The next largest classification of employers was the combined butter, cheese, and creameries group where employment increased from 1118 to a peak of 1386 by 1925, and then fell to 1079 by 1930. The aerated waters factories increased employment from 631 to 747 between 1920 and 1930, and jam, fruit and vegetable canning from 425 to 445. The biscuit, cake and bread bakeries also increased their share of employees, up from 590 to a peak of 1981 by 1930, as did the iceworks where employment surged from just 73 to 537 over the decade. However, employment in the confectionery trades declined in the second half of the period, down from 637 to 551. This was also the case in the breweries, where employment fell from a peak of 598 in 1926 to 482 by 1930. The relative size of the factories in each group varied widely. On the smaller scale were aerated waters works with an employee per factory average that increased from 4.6 to 5.1, iceworks from 1.5 to 7, and butter and cheese factories increasing from 8.2 to 9.3 hands per factory. In the middle-range were the confectioners whose average fell from 79.6 to 45.9, due to the mechanisation of confectionery manufacture and packaging, and the jam, fruit and vegetable canning which improved from 25 to 37 employees per factory over the decade.

Production in the various industries in the F&D group varied considerably during the 1920s. Butter production fluctuated considerably; from 40.7 million lbs in 1920, to 70.4 million lbs in 1924-25, and increased strongly after 1926-27 to a peak of 95.7 million lbs by 1930. The trend in cheese production was not as strong, with 11.5 million lbs produced in 1920, and between 12.5 million and 14.5 million lbs per annum for the balance of the decade, with a low of 7.2 million in 1923. Beef production was unstable, at first growing from 147 million lbs (1920) to a peak of 318 million lbs (1924-25), and down to a low of 106 million lbs (1930). Mutton production was even more volatile, from 940,000 lbs (1920), to just 25,000 (1924-25),
to a huge peak of 22 million lbs in 1930-31. The manufacture of biscuits, cakes and bread-baking (the latter added to statistical tables from 1927-28) increased from 23 million lbs in 1920, to 34.4 million lbs by 1926-27 and then, after bread-baking was included, this figure jumped to 110.8 million lbs by 1930. The production of refined sugar generally increased, up from 167,400 tons (1920) to 516,800 tons (1930). The production of jams also showed strong growth until late in the decade, from 7.7 million lbs (1920) to a peak of 14.9 million lbs (1927-28), and down to 12.4 million lbs (1930). The value of production of aerated waters increased to a peak of £434,300 in 1925-26 from £300,000 in 1920, and managed to reach £318,600 in the shadow of the darkening depression. Beer consumption continued to slump during the 1920s, down from 8.9 million gals to 5.3 million gals between 1920 and 1930, despite the generally buoyant conditions in the first half of the decade. However, Queensland drinkers appear to have turned their attention to the liberal consumption of cheap, locally produced rum and other spirits. Distilled spirits production more than doubled over the decade.

6. Clothing, Footwear and Textiles (CFT):
(This group includes woollen and tweed mills, knitting mills, cotton ginning, boot and shoe-making and repairs, clothing, dress, hat, cap, and shirt-making, millinery, dyeing, and cleaning, rope, cordage, sail, tent, tarp, bag and sack-making.)

In the CFT group there was a distinct recovery in the number of factories after the difficult wartime period. The numbers of factories increased steadily in the first half of the decade, from 237 to 283 (1924), and then stabilised in the mid-1920s through to 1930. There were 132 general clothing factories (not including dressmaking, millinery, shirts and underclothing) in 1920; this number had grown to 145 by 1925 but had slipped back to 129 by 1930. In dressmaking and millinery factories, numbers increased from forty-five to peak at fifty-three (1924) and fell to forty-two by 1930. The shirt and underclothing factories experienced a similar trend, up from ten to thirty (1924), and settling at twenty-five by 1930. The number of boot and shoe factories did not decline late in the decade, but instead, growth was steady from thirty-one to fifty-two between 1920 and 1930 (see Fig. 7.22 and Fig. 7.23). Sail, tent and tarp making was quite stable and numbers increased from seven to nine, while hat and cap works were also stable at three factories for the entire period.
Employment and production in the CFT group followed the general trend in factory numbers with a boost from 6857 to 7884 between 1920 and 1924, and then back to 6947 by 1930. The average number of employees per factory in this group continued to decline slightly, down from 28.9 to 25.2 between 1920 and 1930. The number of employees in the general clothing trades (including shirts and underclothing) grew from 3900 to a peak of 4760 in 1924, and down to 4157 by 1930. The average number of employees per factory for these trades decreased slightly from 27.5 to 26.9. In the dressmaking and millinery factories, the employee
average declined at a greater rate, from 25.5 to 16.1, and this is reflected in the steady
decrease in employment numbers from 1146 to 678 between 1920 and 1930. In the boot and
shoe factories employment initially increased from 1136 to a high of 1443 in 1923, and then
decreased to 1067 by 1930. The employee average for the boot trades also declined, from 36.6
to 20.5. Hat and cap-making employment numbers fell in the first half from 436 to 131 in
1925, and then recovered some ground to 205 by 1930. Sail, tent and tarp-making numbers
increased from 109 to 153, as did rope and fibrous materials, up from 239 to 525 employees.
The production of boots and shoes increased from 703,206 pairs to 811,506 pairs between
1920 and 1923. This was followed by a more or less steady decline, down to 580,332 pairs by
1930. The value of all types of clothing produced stood at £1.8 million in 1920, peaked at £2
million in 1923, and then dropped through £1.8 million (1925-26) to a low of £1.5 million by
1930.


(This group includes the manufacture of paper boxes and bags, printing and binding,
newspapers, die-sinking and engraving.)

The number of factories in the printing trades improved later in the decade after a slight slump
from 140 to 137 by 1925, and had approached 150 by 1930. During the twenties the statistical
series list newspaper firms separately from the general printing and binding firms, with both
industries demonstrating relative stability as the number of factories in both classes remained
in the mid-to high sixties. Paper box and bag manufacturers, the only other type specified in
this group, increased from four to six over the decade. The BPP sector remained a significant
employer; the number of hands increased from 3100 to 3865 by 1925, and then declined
slightly to 3659 by 1930 (see Fig. 7.24). Some consolidation is evident from the average
number of employees per factory which increased from 22.1 to 24.5 during the 1920s. The
printing and binding classification accounted for approximately fifty-four per cent of the
combined printing-newspapers classification, with employment in the latter increasing from
1563 to 1919 by 1925, and down to 1792 by 1930. In newspapers, employment also increased
in the first half, from 1330 to 1632 by 1925 and then 1565 in 1930. The average number of
employees per printery increased from 23.7 to 26.7, as was the case with newspapers, up from
20.1 to 22.7. In the bag and box classification, where employment increased from 135 to a
peak of 191 by 1925, before falling away to 169 by 1930. The average fell from 33.7 to 28.2,
yet the paper box and bag firms were, on average, the largest type of factory in this group.
Statistics on the division of labour by gender in the printing trades are not available, although PIEU records reveal that of the 1658 members in Queensland in 1920, 335 were female. This figure had grown to 564 of 2262 members in 1930. PIEU records note that of the 3843 printing trades employees in Queensland in 1927-28, 838 were females, or approximately twenty-two per cent of all employees. 42

8. Coaches, Wagons and Motor Vehicles (CWMV):
(This group includes the manufacture and repair of coaches, wagons, motors, motorcycles and bicycles, motor body building and repairs, saddlery and harnessware, and spokes.)

In the CWMV group the number of factories increased steadily, from 147 to 160 by 1925, and to 197 by 1930. The greater use of motor vehicles during the 1920s saw a rapid expansion in the number of motor, motorcycle and bicycle workshops, from 50 in 1920 to 120 by 1930. There was a corresponding decline in the number of wagon and coach, and saddle and harness makers, the former dropping from sixty to forty-seven, and the latter from thirty-three to twenty-eight during the decade. Employment in the CWMV group experienced a strong surge between 1920 and 1925, up from 1364 to a peak of 2236, but this was followed by an almost

equally dramatic decline to 1661 by 1930 (see Fig. 7.25). This decline is mirrored in the reduction in the average number of employees per factory which, for the entire group, fell from 9.3 to 8.4. Employment classifications do not directly correspond to the factory type classifications. However, in broad terms, the coach, wagon, motor body building, motor, motorcycle and bicycle repair and manufacture works employed 979 hands in 1920. However, from 1925 separate figures are given for coaches and wagons (415 to 237 by 1930), motor, motorcycle, and bicycle workshops (1035 to 998 by 1930), motor body building and repairs (550 to 288 by 1930), and saddle and harness makers from 332 (1920) to 236 (1925), and 138 (1930). The employee average for all classifications, except motor body and saddlery and harness making, decreased from 19.6 to 10.3. In the saddlery and harnessware group the employee average halved, from 10 to 5, and in the motor body building trades the average declined from 8.6 (1925) to 6.2 by 1930.

9. Furniture and Bedding (F&B):
(This group includes the manufacture of bedding and upholstery, furniture, cabinets, picture frames, blinds, wicker and bamboo goods, brooms and brushware.)

In the F&B trades the growth trend continued during the twenties, increasing steadily from 100 to 109 by 1925 and to 114 by 1930. Furniture and cabinet making works increased strongly between 1920 and 1923 (79 to 93) and then settled back at eighty-nine by 1930. Broom and brush makers moved up from nine to ten (1925) and down to eight by the end of
the decade. Bedding and upholsterers, on the other hand, grew in number, from six to eight, while picture framers declined from five to four between 1920 and 1930. The mixed results, in terms of factory numbers, were not reflected in overall employment growth in this group as numbers grew from 1359 to 1716 (see Fig. 7.26), and the employee average from 13.6 to 15 between 1920 and 1930. The greatest number of employees was to be found in the furniture and cabinet making industry, which experienced consistent employment growth from 1289 (1920) to 1428 (1930). In bedding and upholstery the number of hands also increased, from 70 to 100. Shortages of skilled upholsterers occurred at times in the early 1920s as many upholsterers opted to take up positions in the more lucrative motor trimming trades. The trend was regressive in picture framing employment, which fell from 15 and 14, and in broom and brush making which decreased from 174 to 116 1925 and 1930.

43 Premier’s Department, Letter from the Federated Furnishing Trade Society to Premier Theodore, 1 February 1923, PRE/A752, 1006, QSA.
10. Heat, Light and Power (HLP):

(This group includes electric light and power generation, and gas works.)

In the power and energy generation industries the number of plants increased from thirty-one to forty-eight between 1920 and 1930. The number of gasworks remained at sixteen, the same as war-time numbers, whereas there was a boom in the number of electrical generation plants, which rose from thirteen to thirty-one by 1930. This expansion, of course, was in response to the increasing adoption of, and demand for, electricity for domestic and industrial purposes. The war-time employment growth trend in this group continued through the twenties, increasing from 1067 to 1353 by 1925 and 1514 by 1930 (see Fig. 7.27). Employment in gasworks was finally overtaken by electrical generation plants from the middle of the decade. Employment in electrical generation increased from 477 in 1920 to peak at 873 by 1927, while gasworks employment increased from 559 to peak at 730 by 1927. Interestingly, the average number employed per factory in this group actually decreased, from 34.4 to 31.5, due to the expansion of small electrical generation plants that required fewer employees. In the gasworks classification, however, the employment average increased, from 34.9 to 44.4, compared to electrical generation which decreased from 36.7 to 25.7 employees per plant.

11. Specialised and Other (S&O):

![7.27 HLP Factories & Employment 1920-1929](image-url)
(This group includes the manufacture of domestic and industrial chemicals, fertiliser, surgical and scientific instruments, jewellery and timepieces, leather and rubber goods, toys, umbrellas, soap and candles, musical instruments, and other.)

The number of factories in this eclectic group increased steadily from forty one to sixty-eight, with jewellers and watchmakers up from eighteen to twenty-one, surgical and scientific instrument making up from eight to fourteen, and leather goods-making increasing from six to ten factories between 1920 and 1930. Employment in this group matched factory growth, increasing from 677 to 903 between 1920 and 1930 (see Fig. 7.28). However, of these factory types, the most numerous suffered deficits in employment: the jewellers and electroplaters with 167 (1920) falling to 129, followed by chemicals with 118, reduced to 57. Scientific and surgical instrument making, however, recorded strong growth, up from 66 to 92, and leather goods from 123 to 203. The average number of employees per factory for the group was reduced slightly from 16.5 to 13.3.
Manufacturing in the Political Economy

The statistical profile above demonstrates something of the great diversity of manufacturing operations that existed in Queensland by the 1920s, and the relative importance of the sector to the state’s economy. The profile also alludes to variations in the manner that particular industries responded to changes in market conditions and many of the difficulties, both commercial and political, with which the manufacturing industries had to contend. In the political sphere, manufacturing remained on the margins of political action and debate, despite the move to establish a heavy industries base through the proposal to establish a state iron and steel works. Labor all but ignored the sector after the failure of the steel works proposal, and the decline of the various state manufacturing enterprises in the mid-1920s, and it was left to the conservative Moore government (1929-1932) to take some action to assist and encourage the fuller development of the state’s manufacturing base.

During the 1920s, the frequency and depth of debate surrounding the need for government to provide positive encouragement to manufacturing increased. Manufacturers called for measures to curb import dumping, and for the adoption of programs and policies that gave preference to locally manufactured products in tenders for government contracts. Various new and existing employer organisations pursued these goals; organisations such as the Australian Natives Association (ANA), Australian Industries Protection League (AIPL), Australian Preference League (APL), Queensland Preference League (QPL), and others. This was an Australia-wide phenomenon spearheaded by the ‘Made in Australia Movement’ campaign that began in 1922. The movement, initiated by Ambrose Pratt of the AIPL, included the ANA, the various state Chambers of Manufacturers, and other organisations and companies supportive of Australian manufacturing. This organised campaign represents the maturing of the push, begun early in the century, to promote Australian manufactured goods to the

44 The AIPL was established in Melbourne in 1923 to lobby the Commonwealth and state governments for more active policies to foster and protect Australia’s secondary industries. Australian Industries Protection League, AIPL Manuscript Papers, 1923-1930, MS756/Boxes 1-6, National Library of Australia [NLA], Canberra.
46 The QPL had several branches across Queensland, organised conferences and display weeks, pro-local manufacturing rural propaganda campaigns, and had a youth wing, called the Young Queensland League, for both boys and girls. ‘Australian Made’, Worker, 6 November 1924, p. 19; ‘Local Industries’, DS, 26 October 1926; ‘New Activities’, DS, 8 October 1927 & ‘Local Industry: Support Urged - Preference League Display’, QIG, 12, 6, pp. 421-2.
domestic market, which was an attempt, as it were, to overturn the cultural cringe against locally manufactured products.

Queensland Labor Premier E.G. Theodore demonstrated his support for this campaign in an open letter published in the *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard* in 1923. Theodore declared that, ‘... there should be no diversity of opinion as to the expediency of this policy’. Australia’s destiny, he argued, depended upon local support of local industries.

Tradition dies hard, but the prejudice against goods made in Australian factories by Australian workers, is dying and this movement should hasten its end. ... Australian legislation should foster and encourage Australian industry, and not permit it to be hampered by foreign legislation cherishing foreign industry. The fostering of home industries enlarges our powers of consumption, both of the domestic and foreign article, creates employment, and circulates Australian money among Australian people.48

While Theodore seemed happy to encourage the development of secondary industries along national lines it is clear his preference was for rural development in his own state.

Theodore was not alone. In the federal sphere the twenties were dominated by the conservative Prime Minister Stanley Bruce, whose campaign slogan, ‘Men, Money, and Markets’, reflected his penchant for the potential development of primary industries.49 The Commonwealth, like successive Queensland governments expended great sums by way of subsidies and infrastructure projects to support the rural sector. Tariff protection for manufacturers, while maintained, was complex and ill-directed, and became a constant source of friction between the manufacturers and the free-trade Bruce-Page government, whose primary response was to promote economic growth through reciprocal preferential trade within the British Empire.50 The Chamber of Manufacturers in New South Wales became disenchanted to the point that they openly endorsed Labor’s protection and secondary industries policy in the lead-up to the 1929 federal elections.51

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The contemporary Labour press also became increasingly supportive of assisting the secondary industries and were concerned at the impact the dumping of cheap imports had on the sector.\textsuperscript{52} Many groups, led by the employer chambers, and from the mid-1920s by the QPL, stressed the need to support local manufacturing in Queensland. They urged the public, and the government, to seek out Queensland manufactures and purchase them in preference to imported items. There were, however, some differences of opinion and emphasis between these groups, with the chambers more representative of larger manufacturers, while the QPL stood for the desires of the smaller scale manufacturing firms.\textsuperscript{53} The message was clear, buy local and create local jobs, a message stressed by Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane,\textsuperscript{54} himself no stranger to economic and business affairs, and something of a speculator in Queensland mining shares. The manufacturers, and other lobby groups, were equally critical of the perceived failure of Commonwealth tariffs to materially assist the growth of the sector, as they also were critical of the lack of assistance and contractual preference afforded to them by the Queensland government.\textsuperscript{55}

The QCM, and various individuals and organisations, were active in seeking government support for industry development schemes, programs to develop new markets and expand existing ones, and to promote exports of Queensland manufactures.\textsuperscript{56} The employer organisations, together with the unions, also advocated the streamlining of the state’s apprenticeship procedures, and the reorganisation and development of an up-to-date technical education system. Such measures, they hoped, would alleviate the endemic shortages of skilled labour that hampered the expansion of various sections of the manufacturing industry from time to time. To this end the government did expand the role of pre-vocational and vocational technical education for apprentices. Moreover, through the Industrial Court, the Queensland Apprenticeship Committee was established and comprised industry, union and government representatives who advised the government on how best to direct and regulate

\textsuperscript{52} For some examples representative of these issues see; ‘Importer's Paradise’ \textit{DS}, 6 October 1923; ‘Local Industry First’, \textit{DS}, 24 November 1923; ‘Robbing 50,000 Australian Workers’, \textit{Worker}, 10 April 1924, p. 8; ‘Bruce's "Industrial Development”’, \textit{Worker}, 1 May 1924, p. 8; ‘Australia First’, \textit{Worker}, 26 June 1924, p. 21; ‘Ruinous to Australia’ & ‘Foreign-Made Goods’, \textit{DS}, 4 April 1925. & A.J. Nettleford, Chairman of the National Conference on Australian Made Goods, to Premier Theodore, 30 January 1925, PRE/A825, 1004, QSA.


\textsuperscript{54} ‘Work Needed’, \textit{DS}, 28 April 1924.

\textsuperscript{55} Premier’s Department, Letter from the Australian Industries Protection League to Premier Theodore, 17 June 1920, PRE/A664, 5747, QSA.

\textsuperscript{56} Premier’s Department, Letter from the QCM to Acting Premier Fihelly, 6 August 1920, PRE/A668, 7093, QSA; Letter from Broughton Richmond to Premier Theodore, 22 May 1922, PRE/A726, 5347, QSA & \textit{RCCAR}, 1931, pp. 5 & 10-11.
the development of trade training and apprenticeships from late 1919.\textsuperscript{57} The Apprenticeship Committee was also responsible for the training of apprentices and finding work placements for them in the manufacturing trades.\textsuperscript{58} The whole apprenticeship question became an increasingly hot political issue when the government introduced changes to the system in September 1923, as employers, wanting a reliable source of cheap skilled labour, and unions, fearful of a dilution of skilled labour, and with government bureaucrats, wanting to institutionalise the whole process, all sought to influence the running of the scheme to their advantage.\textsuperscript{59}

The lobbying and industrial work of the numerous employer associations, led by the QEF, QCM, and BCC, was generally directed towards proposing amendments and reforms to government industrial legislation, tariffs, wages, and taxation. The growth in this activity led to a good deal of overlapping between these groups, and many combined meetings were held to streamline action and present some form of united position, when a lack of competing priorities made this possible.\textsuperscript{60} To streamline the industrial lobbying process, the QEF and the QCM decided to amalgamate their industrial sections, with the QCM officially affiliating with the peak body in mid-1922.\textsuperscript{61} The complexity of the issues was deepened by the often competing interests of the various branches of the manufacturing sector, which made united positions on most issues very difficult to negotiate.

These problems arose from the independent stance of most of the manufacturing employer organisations that were active in Queensland by the 1920s. There were approximately twenty-

\textsuperscript{57} Queensland Employers' Federation, \\textit{Minutes of Meetings, 1914-1928}, 1 October 1919; 10 December 1919; 23 June 1920; 7 October 1920; 15 December 1920; 27, September 1923; 17 January 1924; Film 0090, V2/C1, JOL.

\textsuperscript{58} "The Apprenticeship problem", \textit{QIG}, 7, 2, (1922), p.117; "Apprenticeship Committees", \textit{QIG}, 7, 4, (1922), p. 194. & "How to become an apprentice", \textit{QIG}, 7, 8, (1922) p. 615. The Central Apprenticeship Committee controlled pre-vocational training, and when a youth had acquired a certain level of competency, the Committee would direct the potential apprentice to one of the Group Apprenticeship Committees (each Group would represent a particular trade or industry). The Group Committees would help youths find an employer so they could become officially indentured and receive paid employment and on the job and vocational technical training.


\textsuperscript{60} For examples of inter-organisational cooperation on these issues see Queensland Employers' Federation, \textit{Minutes of Meetings, 1914-1928}, 5 January 1920, 20 January 1920, 24 February 1920, 24 March 1920, 15 May 1920, 23 September 1920, 11 February 1921, 10 March 1921, 20 May 1921, 8 June 1921, 19 September 1921, 23 November 1921, 24 January 1922, 6 February 1922, 6 April 1922, 11 May 1922, 6 December 1923, 27 September 1923, 17 January 1924, 21 August 1924, 22 September 1924, 31 August 1925, 22 October 1925, & 22 September 1927, Film 0090, V2/C1, JOL; Department of the Treasury, Letter from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, Queensland Chamber of Manufactures, and the Queensland Taxpayers Association, to the Under-Secretary to the Treasurer, 4 June 1929, A458; 745/1/416, AA (ACT) & 'Human Element in Industry', \textit{QIG}, 11, 2, (1926), p.175.

\textsuperscript{61} Queensland Employers' Federation, \textit{Minutes of Meetings, 1914-1928}, 6 June 1922; 11 May 1922, & 22 June 1922,

Similarly, individual companies sometimes directly sought individual union support, and the manufacturing unions were also vocal in their own right, lobbying the government directly, and also through the internal policy processes and committees of the Labor party, for more assistance to develop manufacturing industries. Nevertheless, the QCM and others, would also single out the perceived unreasonable wage demands and politicisation of the unions as contributing significantly to the problems that beset the manufacturing sector. As changes in public opinion shifted in favour of secondary industries, the level of prima facie support given by Queensland’s politicians for measures to assist in the establishment of new secondary industries intensified as the decade progressed. It should come as no surprise that there was often a distinct cleavage between their verbal utterances and posturing and subsequent practical political action.

Film 0090, V2/C1, JOL.

62 Queensland Employers’ Federation, ‘Combined Meeting of Queensland Employer Organisations, 4 March 1919’, Minutes of Meetings, 1914-1928, Film 0090, V2/C1, 1914-1928, JOL. Of the forty-seven associations invited to attend this meeting, twenty-five were manufacturing associations. The full names of these organisations are: The Queensland Tinsmiths Employers’ Association [QTEA], Ironmasters’ Association of Queensland [IMAQ], Queensland Master Printers & Allied Trades Assoc. [QMPTA], Queensland Confectioners’ Assoc. [QCA], Queensland Biscuit Manufacturers Assoc. [QBMA], Master Bakers’ Assoc. [MBA], Brisbane Timber Merchants’ Assoc. [BTMA], Queensland Country Sawmillers’ Assoc. [QCSA], Queensland Cheese Manufacturers’ Assoc. [QCMA], Queensland Ice Assoc. [QIA], Picture Frame Makers’ Assoc. [PFA], Brick Manufacturers’ Assoc. [BkMA], Cooperative Dairy Companies’ Assoc. [CDCA], Monumental Masons’ Assoc. [MMA], Master Farriers Assoc. [MFA], Master Coachbuilders & Wheelwrights’ Assoc. [MCWA], Master Jewellers’ Assoc. [MJA], Queensland Tailors & Clothing Manufacturers’ Assoc. [QTSCMA], Queensland Tent and Sail Manufacturers’ Assoc. [QTSMA], Master Coopers’ Assoc. [MCA], Furniture Manufacturers’ Assoc. [FMA], Brewers’ Assoc. [BA], and the Cordial Manufacturers’ Association [CMA].

63 Amalgamated Engineering Union [AEU], Brisbane District Committee Minute Book (1918-21), 19 October 1920, Z240/Box 15, & AEU, Brisbane District Committee Minute Book (1921-25), 20 November 1923 & 22, January 1924, Z240/Box 16, NBAC; ‘Preference for Australia’, Worker, 11 September 1924, p. 9; ‘Engineering Work’, DS, 11 June 1927; ‘Big Steel Contracts Gone South’, DS, 15 June 1927.

64 AEU, Minute Book (1921-25), 15 November 1921; 31, July 1923, 2 October 1923 & 14 October 1924, Z240/Box 16, NBAC; ‘Fostering Queensland Manufacturers’, DS, 4 July 1924.

The Labor governments under Theodore (1919-1925), William Gillies (1925), and William McCormack (1925-1929), expended their greatest efforts in the industrial sphere, in the areas of arbitration and conciliation, the basic wage, occupational health and safety, unemployment insurance, and technical education and apprenticeships. The most significant change to affect the manufacturers were the amendments to the Arbitration Act in 1925 that saw a reorganisation of the award system, and the Industrial Court being superseded by the Queensland Board of Trade and Arbitration Court. The Board of Trade differed in operation to the Industrial Court as it was responsible for administrative as well as judicial function in the sphere of industrial relations.  

Public works projects and rural development schemes remained the spearheads of Labor’s macro-economic policies, while the state enterprises gradually lost their lustre as instruments of micro-economic policy. Theodore, Gillies, McCormack, John Fihelly, William Forgan Smith, A.J. Jones, F.A. Cooper, and other Labor members, voiced their support for the vigorous development of secondary industries (most prominently through state enterprise), contractual preference, more effective Commonwealth tariffs and bounties, and the promotion of ‘Buy Australian’ manufactures. Labor only formally adopted a policy of preference for Queensland manufactures in government contracts in the 1926 State Labor platform. There is, however, little evidence of it being adopted in practice.

Various reasons were offered at the time to explain the slower development of manufacturing in Queensland. For A.J. Jones, Minister for Mines, the greatest problem affecting the development of the state’s secondary industries was the lack of population and access to sufficient capital for manufacturers. Labor ministers were pleased to exploit the political capital of awarding contracts for government work to Australian companies, while remaining virtually deaf to the pleas of Queensland firms to be given some extra consideration or preference in tendering for this work. Concern over the government’s treatment of the

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68 ‘You’re Home and dried’, DS, 10 April 1926. There is no mention of a policy of preference for Queensland manufactures in any State Labor Platform prior to 1926.


70 ‘Support Local Industry’, DS, 15 August 1923.
manufactures stirred debate from the Opposition benches, and some advice on the type of measures the government might take, such as taxation reform and fiscal responsibility, to more adequately assist the sector.\textsuperscript{71} Labor’s reticence to directly assist private enterprise was based upon the premise that if the state should foster manufacturing it should do so through the establishment of state enterprises, which were intended to promote greater competition with the private sector, rather than to assist it.\textsuperscript{72}

The central priority of all the Labor administrations since 1915 had been to promote employment and wages justice in sufficient measure to provide a reasonable standard of living for the working classes. Clearly, Labor saw rural development and the public sector as key elements in providing new and expanding employment opportunities, and the institutionalisation of collective bargaining through the Industrial Court and Board of Trade as the means by which to seek improved living standards. In many ways the case for more effective government assistance to the private manufacturing sector fell victim to the internal tensions and competing priorities within Labor’s own ranks. The dominant rural workers (shearers, miners and timber-getters), most notably within the AWU faction, the urban trades and process workers (in the various manufacturing, building and construction, wholesale and retail trades), the public sector employees (railways and public works), and the independent small farmers, so successfully courted by Labor during the twenties, all had their own economic development policy barrows to push. Within this often fractured and fragile political alliance rural development maintained the ascendency and the fate of the manufacturing sector was an issue that remained on the margins of debate until very late into the decade.

Nevertheless, some on the conservative side of the political spectrum developed a more realistic understanding of the future potential of manufacturing and urbanisation. Queensland Nationalist politician Colonel Donald Cameron stressed the importance of protectionism and manufacturing to Australia’s economic growth, and moreover, he argued, that for the White Australia Policy to be a success, Queensland needed to rapidly increase its population base.\textsuperscript{73} Cameron understood the futility of the yeomanry ideal in this respect, and instead, bravely

\textsuperscript{71} Fletcher, \textit{QPD}, 138 (1921), p.1425; ‘Help Local Industry’, \textit{DS}, 1 August 1928.

\textsuperscript{72} ‘State Enterprises’, \textit{Worker}, 4 May 1922, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{73} Donald Charles Cameron [1879-1960] was a Queensland soldier (in the Boer War and World War I), pastoralist, and politician. Federal member for Brisbane, 1919-1931 & Lilley, 1934-1937, for the Nationalist Party and then United Australia Party from 1934.
advocated greater industrial development and urbanisation as the key to securing strong population growth. Cameron claimed that demographic evidence showed that urbanised economies, with developed secondary industries, experienced higher population growth than rural-based economies.\textsuperscript{74} Indeed, the historical experience in Australia supports Cameron’s position.\textsuperscript{75} In challenging the dominant developmental discourse of the period Cameron had realised that for the agricultural sector to develop to its full potential it must be accompanied by significant urbanisation and growth in industrial production.

Cameron’s position echoes that of an earlier Queensland politician, John Mann, MLA for Cairns. During a debate on a motion to establish a state iron and steel works put before the Queensland Parliament in 1906, Mann argued that an economy and its society could not exist on primary industries alone. Mann, dissenting from the usual calls to bolster rural development, stressed that secondary industries should be encouraged and that Queensland actually required a ‘manufacturing population’ to underpin the consumptive demand necessary to support a dynamic manufacturing sector.\textsuperscript{76} A healthy rate of urban population growth was a fundamental prerequisite for the expansion of the agricultural sector, by providing the necessary domestic market for produce, and avenues for processing raw materials into more sophisticated, valuable and marketable manufactures. What Cameron deemed to be necessary had, indeed, already begun despite government efforts to limit urban growth and promote the yeomanry paradise.

By the late 1920s, as the shadows of the repeated failure of closer settlement schemes touched the political consciousness of the electorate, voices in support of secondary industries had strengthened, rising above the rural development din to declare that Queensland and Australia’s future depended upon the development of a vibrant manufacturing sector. Some dared to suggest that the working up of raw materials into manufactures would inevitably eclipse the contribution of rural production to economic growth and participation.\textsuperscript{77} In October 1929, after the election in May of the first conservative government to rule Queensland since 1914, the new Premier Arthur Moore successfully introduced the \textit{Industries Assistance Act 1929} on behalf of the Country Progressive National Party (CPNP)

\textsuperscript{74} ‘Australian Trade Development’, \textit{DS}, 22 June 1927.
\textsuperscript{76} Mann, \textit{QPD}, 98 (1906), p.1344.
government. The Act was designed ‘... to foster the development of secondary industries by enabling advances to be made or guaranteed for the assistance of corporations engaged or who may hereafter be engaged in such industries and for other purposes’. The rationale of the Act was to help create new industries and employment opportunities in Queensland. It was to operate along similar lines to the existing *Primary Producers’ Co-operative Associations Act 1923* and *Agricultural Bank Act 1901*. The *Industries Assistance Act* was modelled on the British *Trade Facilities Act* and was similar in intent to an Act introduced in Western Australia in 1915. The debate in the house on this Act was tempered by the freshly minted conservative government’s desire to be active in industrial policy and economic development, a desire that stemmed from the frustration experienced of years on the Opposition benches.78

H.E. Sizer, the Minister for Labour and Industry, pre-empted the introduction of the Act, claiming the government was prepared to use state credit to directly assist secondary industries in a similar manner as had been done for Queensland’s primary industries.79 Sizer’s emphasis on direct assistance, including a strong policy of preference for Queensland manufactures in government contracts, gained the full support of the QCM.80

Unfortunately, the Act was an abject failure due, primarily, to its disastrous simultaneous timing with the onset of the 1929-1933 depression. By July 1930, after eight months of operation, the Industries Assistance Board had received twenty-five applications for assistance; of these, nine were ruled ineligible, eight were rejected, and another eight were declared under review. No money had been advanced under the provisions of the Act, but ex-gratia advances totalling £4080 had been made prior to the implementation of the Act.81

Copies of two applications to the Industries Assistance Board (IAB) found in the Queensland State Archives, indicate the restrictive nature of the scheme. In one example, a small monumental masonry firm in Bundaberg requested assistance, amounting to £160 over two years, to purchase some machinery which would enable the firm to manufacture stone products, which at that time being imported from Sydney, and therefore to employ extra hands. The IAB rejected the application as the company was not a corporation as defined in Clause 2 of the Act.82 Clearly, the development of privately owned family firms was not a

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79 ‘Aid for Industry’, *QIG*, 14, 6, 1929, p. 331.
82 Premier’s Department, Letter from A. Armitage, Proprietor of the Burnett River Monumental Works, Bundaberg, to Premier Moore, 17 June 1930, PRE/A999, 3684, QSA & Burnett River Monumental Works, ‘Industries Assistance Act -
priority of the Act. Another application, by the Standply Timber Company, was rejected for several reasons. The IAB felt that; first, the company had sufficient resources to finance its own expansion and that it was not establishing a ‘new’ industry, and finally, that the plywood trade was in a depressed state.\(^3\) The Act is, however, credited with one notable success: that is in attracting the American Smelting and Refining Company to establish a works at Mount Isa late in 1930. The scheme continued in a limited manner under subsequent Labor governments after it was amended under the *Industries Assistance and other Acts Amendment Act 1933*.\(^4\)

**Conclusion**

Successful Labor governments generally paid only lip service to the needs of the manufacturers and the workers who relied upon these industries for their livelihoods. In reality, the fiscal burden of Labor’s rural development and public works programs militated against the possibility of reductions in the tax burden of the manufacturers, and encouraged the government to seek out the cheapest tenders, generally to be found interstate or overseas. The loans embargo of the early 1920s served only to further restrict the options the government could exercise in encouraging secondary industries, as did the servicing of the huge public debt it had inherited and maintained. The manufacturers persevered under the weight of increasing factor costs (raw materials, labour, equipment, taxes and charges) but were caught in a cycle of expansion that was limited by a lack of sufficient access to capital and marginal profitability: a large percentage of their profits had to be turned back into these enterprises in order to expand, maintain production, or indeed, just to survive. For Queensland manufacturers the factors prohibiting expansion the most were the consistently high cost of labour (relative to elsewhere in Australia and overseas), high levels of state taxes, a general shortage of skilled labour, an inefficient apprenticeship system and underdeveloped technical education infrastructure, and the absence of productivity linked incentives in the award system.

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\(^3\) Premier’s Department, Letter from W.M. Patterson, Director of Standply Timber Company, to Premier Moore, 10 June 1930, PRE/A998, 3539, QSA.

The state could have done much to assist the manufacturers by easing their burden of taxation and charges, by offering bounties and rebates to encourage the production of new lines and more sophisticated goods, and by adopting an active policy of preference for Queensland manufactures in government contracts. Structural difficulties not associated with government policy also posed problems since it was also true that the manufacturing sector relied upon often obsolete machinery and methods. However, the lack of high profits and restricted access to capital made investment in new plant most difficult. Exogenous economic forces, particularly the volatility of commodity markets in Europe, buffeted the Queensland economy, but fortunately relatively, solid domestic demand for locally produced manufactures provided sufficient demand for the manufacturers to generally overcome the endemic problems they faced. Labor’s fiscal policy and lack of motivation to materially assist the state’s secondary industries, and its seeming resolve to throw money into state enterprises of questionable economic viability also contributed to the difficulties that Queensland’s manufacturers had to face. Nevertheless, it is a tribute to employers and employees that Queensland’s secondary industries sector made as much progress as it did. The foundations were laid for the manufacturing sector eventually to take its place as the single most important industrial sector in the Queensland economy in the latter half of this century.

85 Lougheed, Century of Service, p. 27.