

much the most important, and it was not till December that it showed signs of recovery from the effect of the complete upset of its elaborate credit system at a time when its outlook was already bad. There is reason to think that the prospect is now favourable. In some industries the home demand was stimulated by the absence of imported manufactured goods. In others, where the export trade is only a fraction of the whole, there has been little contraction. Coal is, after cotton, the most valuable of our exports, but enlistment has completely removed any surplus of labour that might have appeared from the check in the foreign demand. Almost the whole trade of export of herrings is gone, and there was a great loss of work for the women in this seasonal industry, but the men trawl for mines instead of fish.

There is no means of knowing how many persons are employed directly by the Government or in Government contracts, but the effect of the vast demands for the service of the war are visible in every district and in a majority of industries. The railways are overworked. The docks at the Mersey and Thames are congested, and one can only imagine vaguely the pressure at Southampton. Woolwich has made demands for labour which have affected all the trades whose members can turn to arsenal work, the shipbuilding yards are overfull with work, and the manufacture of small-arms has made a similar call. The woollen industries of the West Riding cannot cope with the demand (though the worsted manufacture is not pressed), and many firms in Northampton and Leicester are very fully occupied. Clothing contracts have relieved a great part of the distress among tailors and dressmakers in London, and the Army demands for carpenters exhausted the ordinary