MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN HARTON:
ITS ORIGINS, GROWTH AND PRESENT NATURE

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Geography at Massey University

By
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# PART ONE

**INTRODUCTORY**

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"..... Marton can justly claim to be an ideal town for setting up secondary industries...." 1

"..... The population over recent years has shown a steady increase and there are signs afoot that the potential of this centrally situated, well planned and solidly supported borough is being realised more and more and that a period of greater industrial development and growth is imminent...." 2

"..... The Borough of Marton has the fastest growth rate of any of the towns in the Wanganui Employment District..." 3

"..... For its size, Marton must be one of the most prolific factory towns in New Zealand.... " 4

"..... Originally the settlement's sole purpose was to service the rich country areas that surround it on all sides, but it has, in recent years, developed into a centre that is above average in industrial development....." 5

Such statements, gleaned from various articles and booklets about the town of Marton, suggest that, in terms of manufacturing industry, it is, in certain respects, atypical of other New Zealand towns of a similar size and has, in fact, considerable potential as a small, industrial centre. The Marton-born writer, too, was aware of certain other distinctive features of the town's manufacturing industry - for example, the virtual absence of industries for processing the produce of its agricultural and pastoral hinterland yet the presence of other industries using imported raw materials with markets of nationwide importance.

This research on manufacturing industry in Marton had
had three objectives:
(a) to consider, with particular reference to the role and influence of the development of transport, the growth and present nature of manufacturing industry in Marton;
(b) to consider the varying significance of factors of industrial location in the development of Marton's industrial landscape; and,
(c) to consider the role of decentralisation of some manufacturing industry from the major urban centres in the future economic stability of rural towns, especially in respect of the employment opportunities so offered.

Methodology

The chief sources of information for the chapters concerned with the growth and development of industry in Marton since its establishment in the 1850's were the recollections of residents who were often able to support their claims with old photographs and newspaper clippings, and the weekly newspaper, "The Rangitikei Mail", which regularly carries features of historical interest. Three works which proved to be particularly useful in this section were Evans' "A History of Agricultural Production and Marketing in New Zealand", Wilson's "Early Rangitikei" and "A History of Marton and Its People" which was published in 1954 to celebrate Marton's seventy-fifth year as a borough.

The chief sources of information for the remainder of the thesis, which is concerned with the present industrial landscape, were Estall and Buchanan's "Industrial Activity and Economic Geography", Greenhut's "Plant Location in Theory and in Practice",
Hoover's "The Location of Economic Activity" and two questionnaires (Appendix A).

Questionnaire A, which deals mainly with the present nature of industry in Marton, was the basis of the major part of the thesis. It was taken personally to all the factory managers in the area during November, 1968 and January, 1969.

Questionnaire B was given to 151 students of Rangitikei College who at the time (November, 1968) had indicated that they might be leaving at the end of the year. This questionnaire yielded, from a youthful viewpoint, information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of life in a rural town as compared with that in a city. This information was used in Chapter 10 which deals with the reasons for the migration of young people from Marton.

One complication arose in the selection of the factories for studying. The Department of Statistics' definition of a "factory", 6 which is used in their statistics, did not seem appropriate for the writer's research which was concerned with manufacturing industry only. It was thus decided to include all factories in the district which manufactured either a product or a component in the survey. Of the total of thirty-six so defined, two were located some distance outside the borough boundaries. These two were included because most of their labour force commutes daily from Marton. It should be noted that the total includes 'owner-operated' factories (which the Department of Statistics excludes) as well as several which are not solely concerned with manufacturing.
As a preliminary investigation before commencing the major part of the research, the industrial sector of Marton was compared with that of thirty-three other New Zealand towns, with populations ranging between 3000 and 7000, to see to what extent the town, and especially its industry, was characteristic. As it was not intended that this should form a major part of the thesis the towns were compared only on the basis of the current statistics of industrial production – numbers of factories, total factory employment, salaries paid, cost of materials, value of production, value added \(^6\), and employment in the manufacturing and transport sectors \(^7\) (Table I).

It can be seen that Marton, with the exception of Stratford, contains a greater number of factories than any other town in the group. In respect of the other categories, the proportion per capita in Marton in each category is, with one exception (employment in the transport sector), in excess of that for over half of the other towns. Seventeen towns have a higher proportion of their population than Marton employed in the transport sector.

It is doubtful, however, whether Marton can be actually described as typical or atypical – for, what are the distinguishing features of a characteristic New Zealand town in the group? New Zealand's small, rural towns show great diversity in all aspects and to analyse a "typical character" would, apart from being very complex, probably prove of doubtful validity. It could be noted, however, and this is not apparent from Table I, that primary processing industries are relatively unimportant in Marton's industrial structure by marked contrast with most other towns in the group. In its own way, then, industry in Marton has its distinctive characteristics, and it is this distinctive character with which this thesis is primarily concerned.
### Table I

**A Comparison of Selected Statistics of Industrial Production in 34 New Zealand Towns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Population (1966 Census)</th>
<th>Number of Factories</th>
<th>Factory Employment (000's)</th>
<th>Average Factory Salary ($000's)</th>
<th>Materials Cost ($000's)</th>
<th>Value of Production Added ($000's)</th>
<th>Employment in Male</th>
<th>Employment in Female</th>
<th>Employment in Total</th>
<th>Employment in Transport</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kaitaia</td>
<td>3056</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>119*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paeroa</td>
<td>3129</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>364*</td>
<td>615*</td>
<td>4396*</td>
<td>5675*</td>
<td>811*</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>147*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiapoi</td>
<td>3134</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>1022</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>134*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waikato</td>
<td>3169</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>508*</td>
<td>912*</td>
<td>2195*</td>
<td>3995*</td>
<td>1255*</td>
<td>320*</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>124*</td>
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<td>Te Aroha</td>
<td>3212</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>297*</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>7275*</td>
<td>4336*</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>223</td>
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<td>298</td>
<td>1435*</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>371</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>5346*</td>
<td>6611*</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>315*</td>
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<td>1424</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>418*</td>
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<td>Balclutha</td>
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<td>284</td>
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<td>817</td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>431*</td>
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<td>159*</td>
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<td>417*</td>
<td>997*</td>
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<td>6531*</td>
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<td>1180</td>
<td>351</td>
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</table>

*Towns with a higher proportion per capita than Marton

**Sources:** Dept. of Statistics, 1967, Census of Population and Dwellings (Employment in manufacturing and transport sectors only).


(All other categories)
FOOTNOTES

6. It should be noted that these statistics "record only those factories engaged in manufacture, assembly, repair or treatment of articles which are classified within the Manufacturing Division of the New Zealand Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities .... The coverage applies to registered factories engaging two or more persons (including the working proprietor) with the exception of: cake and pastry kitchens; bespoke tailors, dressmakers and milliners; boat repairers; abattoirs; railway workshops; the naval dockyard." (Department of Statistics, 1969, New Zealand Industrial Production 1966–1967, 7.) As such, these figures are not solely concerned with manufacturing industry.

7. These two categories of statistics, from another source (the 1966 Census), are not exactly comparable with those of the other categories being derived on a different basis.