

Auckland Industrial District employs more young people below the age of twenty-one years than either of the other districts—*e.g.*, Auckland District, 4,878 ; Otago and Southland District, 4,522 ; Wellington District, 4,177 ; Canterbury District, 3,986. There is a great falling-off in all these districts during the year, showing how the declining birth-rate is telling on the numbers of the young people available for work in factories.

			Auckland.	Otago and Southland.	Wellington.	Canterbury.
1908-9	..	..	5,120	4,862	4,515	4,255
1909-10	..	..	4,878	4,522	4,177	3,986

We have in the whole Dominion a loss of 1,258 young people (under twenty-one years of age) on the factory figures of last year, and this in spite of the arrival and employment of immigrant families.

In my last annual report I showed that during the preceding five years there had been a loss of 6 per cent. of young factory workers, but this year the figures are startling. The next census returns of the children in New Zealand between five and fifteen years of age should make interesting reading.

Overtime.

The overtime worked by men and youths over sixteen years of age is again not being shown this year, owing to the representations of some of the leading unions to the effect that the publication of the hours of overtime created a false impression. No record is collected by the Department of the lost time sustained by workers in many of our manufacturing industries, and, as you are well aware, such industries as bootmaking, slaughtering and meat-freezing, clothing manufacturing, &c., are all subject to slack times, when the workers are put off for sometimes as much as three and four days a week. It is claimed with justice that if the overtime is officially published then the lost time should be shown side by side, so that a fair statement of the facts can be arrived at.

The total number of hours of overtime worked by women and by youths under sixteen years of age was 278,562 hours. These figures are published as it is considered that the loss of time sustained by these workers during slack periods is to a considerable extent compensated by the overtime worked during busy times. The details, according to trades, are shown in this report.

Permits.

During the year permits to work in factories were granted to 1,136 youths and 1,122 girls between fourteen and sixteen years of age. A statement in detail will be found at the end of this report.

Accidents in Factories.

In the New Zealand factories 735 accidents were reported during the year—*viz.*, 7 fatal, 89 serious, 232 moderate, and 407 slight. This is a low percentage of accident, being at the rate of one accident among every 105 workers, and one fatal accident among 11,115 workers. A chart is included in the appendix to this report illustrating the proportion of accidents in factories for the years 1903-10 inclusive.

Prosecutions.

There were 111 convictions for breaches of the Act, and 2 cases brought were dismissed. This is an appreciable reduction on the number of cases brought last year (150). There is now little trouble in administering the Act, and the convictions each year should show a decrease, as the provisions of the Act are now thoroughly well understood.

SCAFFOLDING INSPECTION ACT.

The Act has in its working thoroughly justified its legislative existence, since the diminution of accidents and the greater security felt by workmen engaged in the dangerous occupations of the building trades are very apparent to those acquainted with industrial conditions. The Inspectors seem to have few suggestions to make, except to repeat former warnings concerning the danger of rope railings at considerable heights. The Inspectors have often large districts to cover, and their work has shown considerable zeal and efficiency on their part.