

occurrences in future, steps are at once taken accordingly. However, as a general rule, the accidents are not caused through failure to guard machinery, but through some lapse on the part of the worker, and with the exercise of a little care could have been avoided.

The table hereunder shows the accidents which occurred during the year in each industrial district :—

|                                                |     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Northern Industrial District .. .. .           | 283 |
| Taranaki Industrial District .. .. .           | 8   |
| Wellington Industrial District .. .. .         | 194 |
| Marlborough Industrial District .. .. .        | 2   |
| Nelson Industrial District .. .. .             | 7   |
| Westland Industrial District .. .. .           | 19  |
| Canterbury Industrial District .. .. .         | 112 |
| Otago and Southland Industrial District.. .. . | 119 |

#### SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

I hope to submit to you several necessary amendments required in this Act to make its working more smooth and equitable. As was the case in the Factories Act, there was also a decrease in the number of offences under the Act, 186 cases being taken, as against 216 during the previous year. In all, 175 convictions were obtained, 9 cases were dismissed, and 2 withdrawn. The principal breaches committed were as follows :—

| Nature of Breaches.                                                                                                       | Number of Cases taken. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Failing to close in terms of requisitions by which the hours are fixed by a majority of the shopkeepers concerned .. .. . | 73                     |
| Failing to close shop on statutory half-holiday .. .. .                                                                   | 53                     |
| Failing to grant the weekly half-holiday to assistants .. .. .                                                            | 32                     |
| Failing to pay wages fortnightly.. .. .                                                                                   | 8                      |
| Employing assistants after prescribed hours .. .. .                                                                       | 8                      |
| Employing assistants more than the prescribed number of hours .. .. .                                                     | 6                      |
| Employing assistants overtime without permit .. .. .                                                                      | 5                      |
| Employing assistant before prescribed hour for commencement of employment.. .. .                                          | 1                      |

Of the 9 cases dismissed, one was against a Chinese for failing to give half-holiday to an assistant. The Chinese in question produced a deed of partnership, and on this ground the Magistrate dismissed the case. In another a fruiterer was proceeded against for failing to close in accordance with requisition; the case was dismissed, because he held a New Zealand wine license, and claimed that he was subject to the Licensing Act. A restaurant-keeper was prosecuted for selling cigarettes after hours provided by requisition; the case was dismissed, as the Inspector failed to prove that a requisition was in force. The Magistrates also dismissed 5 further cases, as the witnesses required to support the Department could not be found. Two other cases were dismissed, as the evidence was conflicting, and the Magistrates gave the defendants the benefit of the doubt.

A good deal of feeling existed amongst Wellington shopkeepers dealing in tobacco—against the sale of cigarettes, &c., after hours, generally by Chinese. By requisition under section 25 the Wellington tobacconists close their shops at 8 p.m. on four nights each week, and in accordance with subsection 8 the sale of tobacco, cigarettes, &c., is therefore prohibited after the hour fixed. The Department found that a good deal of illicit trade was being done by Chinese after the ordinary tobacconists had closed, and the Inspectors were instructed to give special attention to the matter, with the result that 13 cases were taken against Chinese storekeepers for selling tobacco after 8 p.m., and a conviction was obtained in each. It is very difficult to detect such cases, and in the event of any further cases coming before the Court it is the intention of the Department to press for heavy penalties. As it is, most of the shopkeepers dealing in other commodities, such as fruit, groceries, &c., partition off the portion of their shops containing the tobacco and securely close it up during prohibited hours.

The largest number of cases under the Act continue to be for failing to close in terms of requisitions, and, as I mentioned in my last report, it is rather surprising that this should be so, seeing that the hours are fixed by a majority of the shopkeepers themselves. Last year there were 49 cases taken for this offence, and this year 73. It is sincerely to be hoped that the number of cases next year will show a decided decrease. A full list of the requisitions now in force is included in this report. For the present year 62 notices were gazetted, as against 55 last year.