

SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

During the year just terminated, important and necessary amendments were enacted which provide for the registration of all retail shops. The definition of “shop” and “shop-assistant” is also extended, and now applies to hotels and restaurants and the persons employed therein. It also fixes uniform hours as well as the statutory half-holiday for the employees in hotels, private hotels, restaurants, tea-rooms, and oyster-saloons, for the whole of the Dominion. Under these new provisions time and wages books (for all shops) and half-holiday books (for hotels and restaurants) are to be properly kept; the latter have to be signed by the employees before leaving the premises on the half-holiday. These provisions have greatly simplified the work of administration, enabling the departmental officers to see that the law is more strictly observed than was the case under previous legislation. Special care was taken to officially notify hotelkeepers and others of these new provisions by circular letters and printed extracts from the Amendment Act, and so to assist them to comply with the law in this respect. Every consideration was shown by the Department’s Inspectors before any action was taken for offences under the said Act.

Shops.

The following table presents a detailed report of the number of shops, employers and employees engaged therein, and the total wages paid in the four chief centres, and the various industrial districts (excluding the above four centres in New Zealand):—

District.	Number of Persons engaged.				Total Persons engaged in Shops.	Number of Shops.	Total Wages during the Year.*
	Employees.		Employers.				
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.			
							£
Auckland City	2,209	1,158	1,582	285	5,234	1,778	292,067
Wellington City	1,658	920	1,440	212	4,230	1,571	239,532
Christchurch City	1,828	911	1,254	321	4,314	1,448	269,476
Dunedin City	1,536	752	1,112	310	3,710	1,258	216,132
Northern District	1,783	719	1,910	179	4,591	1,981	182,994
Taranaki District	609	255	653	25	1,542	662	74,363
Wellington District	2,374	989	2,485	177	6,025	2,512	295,853
Marlborough District	184	69	174	18	445	170	21,666
Nelson District	297	147	330	31	805	332	39,386
Westland District	571	207	620	90	1,488	655	66,517
Canterbury District	981	502	1,029	57	2,569	1,021	119,101
Otago and Southland District—							
Otago	599	197	732	70	1,598	769	60,160
Southland	799	351	610	76	1,836	687	95,148
Totals	15,428	7,177	13,931	1,851	38,387	14,844	1,972,395

* As in the case of factories, the total wages paid refer to the year 1909–10, the figures for 1910–11 not yet being available.

Comparing these totals with those for last year, there are 4,218 more persons employed in shops, whilst the number of shops has increased by 1,620, and the wages paid also show the substantial increase of £160,341 over the previous year’s total.

Auckland City again leads the other cities in the total wages paid during the year 1909–10, the total being £292,067; Christchurch City is next with £269,476; then Wellington City, £239,532; and Dunedin City, £216,132. Adding the amounts paid in wages in the cities to the surrounding districts, the order is as follows:—

	£
Wellington	535,385
Auckland	475,061
Christchurch	388,577
Dunedin	372,440

Last year the four cities were placed in the same relative order, but each combined district shows a considerable advance in the amounts paid on the previous year. No doubt the larger