

All the manufacturing trades show a very steady increase in wages paid, with the exception of the leather-working trades, light, heat, and power trades, and flax-milling.

In regard to the slight decrease in the light- and power-producing trades (electricity and coal-gas), it is interesting to note that while there has been a decrease of £11,823 in wages paid in gasworks there has been an increase in the wages of power-house and dynamo hands of £10,002. It is probable that the erection of more modern plant used for gas-production, with its accompanying labour-saving devices, has in a measure been responsible for the falling-off in wages paid in that industry and, in a lesser degree, the recent exclusion from our figures of some hands, such as main-layers and labourers, who are, strictly speaking, not factory operatives. The flax-milling industry is a very intermittent one, and probably the price of the fibre on the English market was low during the year dealt with.

As regards the increases, it is gratifying to note the very large additional wages paid in the iron and metal and the woodworking trades. This evidences fair progress and steady employment. In the other trades listed the increases are normal, and do not call for special remark.

The following table shows the number of factories in the four chief cities of the Dominion, classified according to the number of hands employed at date of annual registration—viz., April, 1912:—

Town.	Factories employing												
	30 Hands and under.	31 to 50.	51 to 100.	101 to 150.	151 to 200.	201 to 250.	251 to 300.	301 to 350.	351 to 400.	401 to 450.	451 to 500.	Over 500.	Total Factories.
Auckland ..	1,552	45	45	9	3	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	1,658
Wellington ..	1,139	25	13	4	2	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	1,186
Christchurch ..	1,207	22	23	7	5	1	2	..	2	..	2	..	1,271
Dunedin ..	1,089	21	23	8	6	1	3	..	..	..	..	2	1,153
Totals ..	4,987	113	104	28	16	5	5	2	3	1	2	2	5,268

This shows an increase of five factories over last year's total in the four chief cities.

PROSECUTIONS.

The various provisions of this Act continue to be well observed, and it is satisfactory to report that the offences, too, are mostly minor ones; the exercise of a little more care on the part of factory-proprietors should reduce the prosecutions to a minimum.

Ninety-six cases were taken before the Court as against 108 during the previous year. Convictions were obtained in ninety-four cases, and two cases were dismissed.

The different offences under the Act are summarized as follow:—

	Number of Cases taken.
Failing to allow weekly half-holiday to females and boys ..	5
Failing to grant statutory whole holiday to females and boys ..	2
Failing to pay wages at not longer than fortnightly intervals ..	11
Failing to keep wages and overtime book ..	19
Employing persons under sixteen years of age in factories without certificates of fitness ..	11
Employing females and boys overtime without permits ..	21
Failing to report accidents within forty-eight hours of their occurrence ..	5
Failing to register factories ..	9
Miscellaneous offences ..	13

Of the dismissed cases, one, for failing to affix a label to work done in an unregistered factory, was dismissed on the ground that the defendants, who were shopkeepers, did not come within the definition of factory-occupiers for the purposes of the Act, owing to the work in question having been the alteration of a garment and not the making up of raw material into a garment (section 30, subsection 2, of the Act). The other case was against a Chinese laundryman for failure to keep a wages and overtime book. The defendant admitted the fact, but claimed that the alleged employee was a partner. The Magistrate upheld this contention.

OVERTIME.

The total number of hours worked by women and by boys under sixteen years of age was 359,786, a decrease of 5,842 hours compared with the returns of 1911-12. The dressmaking,