

The following trades show increases, viz.: Bootmaking and biscuit-manufacturing (no doubt largely due to military contracts). The following have decreased, viz.: Aerated-water manufacturing and engineering (on account of the shortage of imported supplies), and the building and furniture trades.

Accidents.

—					Slight.	Moderate.	Serious.	Fatal.	Total.
1913-14	..	..	..	..	879	165	52	8	1,104
1914-15	..	..	..	..	747	171	46	3	967
1915-16	..	..	..	..	837	160	65	3	1,065
1916-17	..	..	..	..	938	144	84	5	1,171
1917-18	..	..	..	..	509	317	65	10	901

Of the fatal accidents, four were the outcome of the workers trying to repair belting or put belting into gear without first stopping the machinery; one man was electrocuted whilst using a defective electric torch; another was crushed in the crank-pit on a steamship; a freezing-works labourer was crushed between two railway-trucks, and another was drowned while loading mutton at Gisborne; of the remaining two cases, one man was scalded in a vat of boiling whey and also badly injured on the face while endeavouring to jump from the vat, and the last fatal case was caused by a sawmill worker being struck by a piece of timber thrown from a circular saw. There has been nothing to show that these accidents were due to the inexperience of workers who were brought into the employment on account of the war.

Overtime.

In the fifteen principal towns of the Dominion women and boys worked overtime to the extent of 461,575 hours, 27,799 less hours than were worked during last year. A comparison of the various reports received from different parts of the Dominion reveals that more overtime was worked in the tailoring, clothing, and dressmaking trades than in any other, while woollen-milling, biscuit and confectionery making, and shirtmaking were also responsible for a large number of additional hours being worked. The only towns showing substantial increases in the overtime worked by females and boys are Wellington (approximately 14,000 hours) and Invercargill (approximately 4,000 hours). The following show large decreases: Auckland (27,000 hours), Christchurch (23,000 hours). It is interesting to note that in the ammunition-making industry the hours of overtime worked dropped from 41,534 in 1916 to 16,569 in 1917, and to 6,568 in 1918. This is explained by the fact that, while a considerable quantity of ammunition was early in the war supplied to the New Zealand troops for use abroad, this practice has since been largely discontinued.

No record is obtained of the number of hours' overtime worked by males over sixteen years of age, as permits to work overtime are not required under the Act.

Certificates of Fitness to Children under Sixteen Years of Age to work in Factories.

The number of permits issued to children under sixteen to work in factories was 2,435—an increase of 26 over last year's total. Of these, 1,199 were issued to boys and 1,236 to girls. Of this total, 383 boys and 343 girls had passed the Sixth Standard.

Permits issued.

Year.					Boys.	Girls.	Total.
1913-14..	..	..	..	..	932	1,241	2,173
1914-15..	..	..	..	..	952	1,136	2,088
1915-16..	..	..	..	..	1,100	1,263	2,363
1916-17..	..	..	..	..	1,158	1,251	2,409
1917-18..	..	..	..	..	1,199	1,236	2,435

It might be expected that, on account of the increased demand caused by the war for boys and girls that have left school, there would be a large increase in the number of these permits. The position is that factory-owners had already for several years prior to the war employed as many as they could obtain, and yet the demand for boys and girls was not met. Since the war began the demand has even increased, but there have been other more attractive avenues of employment opened up, such as in offices, shops, &c., for which permits are not required by the law.

Prosecutions.

During the year the number of prosecutions under this Act throughout the Dominion totalled thirty-eight, and in each case a conviction was obtained. These figures show a decrease of five cases on last year's returns.

Regulations.

The Department has under preparation a number of additional regulations under the Act to make specific rules regarding the nature of the fire-escapes, heating, ventilation, sanitary