

## CHINESE LAUNDRIES.

There are 34 registered, employing, including ostensible employers, 62 persons. They are mostly working on the share system, and are kept busy. These Chinese laundries seem to be patronised by the workers.

## ACCIDENTS.

One hundred and forty-three accidents have been reported. One was fatal: an apprentice working in a joinery factory was violently struck by a piece of wood thrown off a circular saw, and died shortly after from the injury he received. Seven were serious: an engineer fitter fell and broke two ribs on the edge of an iron hopper; a man became entangled in a hoist at a corn-crushing factory, and lost his leg as the result; a girl employed at a steam-laundry lost her right hand through being drawn into the steam-mangle; a butcher lost two fingers in a sausage-machine; an apprentice at the printing trade lost his right hand through being caught in the Armoury printing-machine; a young girl was completely scalped in a clothing-factory through her hair being caught on a driving-shaft; and a labourer had his leg broken while loading heavy angle iron on to a truck. The remaining 135 were of a slight nature, consisting of cuts, bruises, &c., incidental to factory-workers, especially where machinery is used. Accidents are all inquired into, and where it is practicable to have machinery guarded, every care is taken to have it done, so as to reduce the risk of accidents to the minimum.

## PROSECUTIONS.

There were 12 prosecutions during the year, and conviction was secured in each case.

## SHOPS AND OFFICES ACT.

This Act is working very satisfactorily, there being very little opposition shown to its provisions. The most difficult provision is section 21, which is certainly sometimes subject to abuse, because by virtue of its provisions any trade can set up for itself a different closing-hour, with the result, for instance, that we have in the city two sets of closing-hours in the same shop each day (except the statutory closing day)—I refer to the hairdressers and tobacconists. These businesses are generally carried on in the same room. The saloon-light is turned down at 8 p.m., and the tobacconist part is open till 9 p.m. This certainly opens the door to overreaching tradesmen to evade the law, and strikes at the usefulness of the Act by abolishing the universal hour for assistance to leave work. Also, the task of inspection is thereby enormously increased. Another difficulty is the mixed nature of the stock owned by many shopkeepers, making it almost impossible to tell whether they are affected by a requisition or not; therefore some shopkeepers close whilst others selling the same goods keep their shops open.

Overtime: There has been comparatively little overtime worked in shops during the year. The fact that a permit is necessary, and that such overtime has to be paid for at time and a half, has had the effect of reducing the overtime very considerably. 641 persons worked 9,747 hours—namely, 368 males worked 7,146 hours, and 273 females worked 2,601 hours. The above is exclusive of overtime worked by grocers' assistants and butchers' assistants, who are working under the provisions of their respective awards.

There were thirteen prosecutions; 12 convictions were recorded, and 1 case was dismissed.

## SERVANTS' REGISTRY OFFICES ACT.

This Act is not altogether satisfactory, in so far that there is no power to check a practice that is becoming too frequent in this district—i.e., the practice of receiving a fee from an applicant and sending him off to a situation when the license-holder has no knowledge that there is any work for him to go to, thus putting the applicant in some cases to considerable expense and loss of time. For example, a licensed office-keeper in the city collected fees from three men whom he led to believe he was sending to a twelve-months job. They paid their steamer and rail fares from Auckland, when they learned there was no work for them; and, further, the office-keeper had no authority to send the men. Inquiries were made, and the fares and fees refunded. Proceedings were taken in the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court for breach of the Act, but the case was dismissed, the Stipendiary Magistrate holding that there was no breach of the Act. He was very emphatic in expressing his dissatisfaction with the Act. There were two other prosecutions, in both of which convictions were secured. There are 39 licenses issued in city and suburbs.

## INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACT.

This branch of our departmental duties absorbs a very considerable amount of time and attention, but the result of our labour may be fairly taken as recompense for the same.

During the period under review there have been two sittings of the Court, and 119 cases were dealt with. In each instance the cases were ably conducted by Mr. LeCren, resulting in 110 convictions and 7 dismissals, whilst 2 cases were withdrawn.

Since his appointment as Inspector of Scaffolding in June last Mr. Gresham has also done good service, in conjunction with his ordinary inspection, in the investigation of alleged breaches of awards in the building trades. Most complaints, he finds, are, especially in country districts, due to the interested parties neglecting to make themselves familiar with the terms of the award under which they work. Of the cases dealt with during the year, 128 are awaiting hearing by the Court this month, of which number about thirty are based on inquiries made by Mr. Gresham.

I cannot conclude this report without tendering my sincere thanks to Dr. Purdy, District Health Officer, and the members of his staff for their consideration and courteous co-operation in all matters in regard to sanitation, which frequently required the combined action of both Departments. Dr.