

At certain periods there has been an acute shortage of skilled labour in the clothing trades (especially dressmaking), and there appears to be an insistent demand in almost all establishments for juvenile labour.

The following table shows the number of factories in the four chief cities of the Dominion, classified according to the number of hands engaged at date of annual registration—viz., April, 1913:—

Town.	Factories employing										Total Factories.
	30 Hands and under.	31 to 50.	51 to 100.	101 to 150.	151 to 200.	201 to 300.	301 to 400.	401 to 500.	Over 500.		
Auckland	1,514	49	44	9	2	3	1	..	..	1,622
Wellington	1,070	19	14	3	1	1	1	..	..	1,110
Christchurch	1,222	32	21	5	5	1	2	..	2	1,290	
Dunedin	1,069	23	21	10	3	3	..	..	2	1,131
Totals	4,875	123	100	27	11	8	4	1	4	5,153	

For more reliable statistics of persons employed in factories and the wages paid to them reference should be made to the last two years' reports—1912 (appendix) and 1913, page 92—where, owing to the unsatisfactory nature of the annual statistics above referred to and as hitherto published, more comprehensive tables are published covering the persons employed in the various trades, their duration of employment, and the wages paid to them throughout the whole year. This was done concurrently with the 1911 census, and it is proposed to continue the series with the 1916 census.

PROSECUTIONS.

It is satisfactory to report that, as compared with the previous year, there has been a reduction in the number of prosecutions which it was found necessary to take under this Act during the year under review, and that the offences were mostly of a minor nature. Sixty-four cases were taken before the Courts, as against ninety-six taken during 1913. Convictions were obtained in sixty-three, and one case was dismissed.

The following is a summary of the various offences:—

Failing to keep wages and overtime book	16
Failing to pay wages at not longer than fortnightly intervals	11
Employing persons under sixteen years of age in factories without certificates of fitness	8
Failing to register factories	8
Failing to report accidents within forty-eight hours of occurrence	7
Employing females and boys overtime without permits	3
Failing to grant statutory whole and half holiday to females and boys	4
Miscellaneous offences	7
Total	64

The dismissed case was taken against an occupier for making a wilfully false entry, in his application for renewal of registration, regarding the number of employees. The Court held that it was not proved to its satisfaction that the entry was wilfully false.

OVERTIME.

The total number of hours of overtime worked by women and by boys under sixteen years of age was 274,888, a decrease of 84,898 hours compared with the returns of 1912-13. The dressmaking, tailoring, clothing, printing, biscuit, confectionery, and jam-making trades and laundering, in point of extra hours worked, have continued to be the busiest, although tailoring, clothing, and dressmaking all show a considerable reduction in the number of hours of overtime worked as compared with last year. The details in trades are given on page 79 of the report.

No records were obtained by the Department in respect to the time lost, through slackness or intermittency of work, by employees during ordinary working-hours, and the figures quoted above do not necessarily indicate that full ordinary time has been worked in all cases. In fact, in some of the trades which worked overtime—viz., tailoring and clothing—a good deal of slackness was experienced during a portion of the year owing to the strikes, and consequently workers did not average full time over the whole year; the overtime worked in those trades may be taken as some compensation for the ordinary time lost. (The tables for the year 1910-11, published in last year's report, page 94, give some information as to the duration of employment in the respective trades during that year. As already stated, it is proposed to collect and publish similar tables for the year 1915-16 concurrently with the taking of the next census.)